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Beyond the Mirror:
***Towards a feminised (cartographic) process of spatiality in
moving-image & installation based art.***

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chelsea College of Art and Design

University of Arts London

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Abstract

Going against phalloculocentrism's situation in a hom(m)o-sexual paradigm and structuration of the male gaze and moving towards a gyneacentric perspective, the thesis explores how a feminised process of reception and interaction with artworks might arise. My installation and moving-image practice-led research is driven by a central question: How might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phalloculocentric reading of an artwork?

The purpose of this thesis is to find a practice-led feminist method of producing an artwork that actively represents the feminine and de-centres an audience's (male) gaze. By dislocating the eye from the lens of a camera, I propose to alter an audience's usual cinematic experience of an image of the feminine through my artwork. This is developed through my proposition for composing an experience of her image through inter-relational exchanges in order to shift the register of reception from gazing to "touching". I claim this could provide a potential for an embodied feminised process of spatiality and perception. A method of cartographically mapping the feminine through diagrams, photographs, drawings and video is developed in the preparation and installation of the central artwork that structures the thesis, *(f)low visibility*, in a nightclub. Feminist (installation and video) practitioners', Martha Rosler, Louise Bourgeois, Mona Hatoum and Pipilotti Rist, approaches to representing the feminine are also investigated. The preparatory designs attempt to subvert the potential for a voyeuristic reception and/or exhibitionistic composition of the installation. This forms an investigation into how the reception and interaction with a feminised image might arise through a tactile process of exploration.

I propose that although *(f)low visibility* produced ungraspable feminised on-screen images it afforded embodied partially locatable inter-relational exchanges in its reception of her. Luce Irigaray's and Donna Haraway's theories of embodiment are developed and intertwined in my conclusion. I claim that interaction with and reception of monstrous cyborg images on-screen occurred through the navigation of a fantasy of intrauterine "touching" in *(f)low visibility's* installation as a feminised process of spatiality.

This thesis is dedicated to: *women*;

my mum, Christine Heather Stoner, my role
model and heroine;

my sister, Natasha Lucinda Karina Stoner
Maffioletti for being the light and laughter.

I love you both.

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Introduction

Synopsis

This thesis presents practice-led research set within a contemporary feminist theoretical framework and is informed by feminist (film) practitioners' artworks; it comprises installation, performance and moving image. The thesis aims to produce artworks which depart from the male regime of sexuation in the visible, which has been labeled *phallogulocentrism*, moving towards a *gyneacentric* perspective of composition.¹ This thesis asks: how might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phallogulocentric reading of an artwork? Questioning the representation of (what I have termed as) the feminine (negative), this thesis takes issue with the imagistic structuration of the feminine as a symbolic site of male desire constructed under the appropriation of the male gaze in *cinematic* and *apparatus* theory.² I explore how to potentially disrupt participants' and an audience's (male) gaze in their reception of an artwork through different approaches to representing the feminine, potentially providing them with an experience that references her 'subjectivities' specificities'.³

This investigation into the potential for a feminised process of spatiality is lead through the central artwork, *(f)low visibility*, an installation comprising moving images, participant interaction and audience reception. The artwork happened in a fetish nightclub, *Torture Garden* in 2008. In this thesis I analyse the plans for the artwork and my observations of the event of the artwork in the nightclub; DVD (Appendix 1) serves as the documentation of the installation, *(f)low visibility*, installed in the nightclub. The work comprises of a screen showing live images directed by participants in an area containing props (that

¹ Irigaray, L. *The Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985).

² Rosen, P. (ed.) *Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986). See also: Bainbridge, C. *A Feminine Cinematics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2008).

³ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985).

represent the female reproductive system), and is composed for audience reception.

The thesis is composed through different plans for the installation of *(f)low visibility* that set-out to query how:

- (a feminisation of) the installation might deform a phalloculocentric reception;
- the contents of the installation might be feminised;
- a feminised process of participant interaction and audience reception might arise.

By investigating different possible configurations and outcomes of the installation, the plans attempt to chart a feminised cartographic method of exploring the potential for a feminine process of spatiality in the thesis. Rather than fixing one definitive example or outcome of the installation, the thesis explores multiple propositions for its orientation, configuration, and reception as a tacit way of navigating the reader through a feminised process of spatial multiplicity.

The research critiques cinematic and apparatus theory because of the structure and relation of (male) looking/gazing which is critically debated in this theoretical context. In contemporary feminist psychoanalytic theories on the cinematic the positionality of the cinematic apparatus and the spectator are analysed in terms of sexual difference. Feminist (psychoanalytic) cinematic theory critiques the parallels drawn between the gender of the apparatus and the sex/gender of the spectator. Its aim is to overcome the phalloculocentric construction of the cinematic apparatus in terms of the 'analogical relation between the screen as mirror and the notion of woman as mirror to the male subject'.⁴ Relations between apparatus, audience/participants, and the representation of the feminine are central concerns in my thesis, informing the composition of *(f)low visibility* (in the diagrams) and conceptual structuring of participant interaction and audience reception of the image. This relation in

⁴ Bainbridge, C. *A Feminine Cinematics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2008), p. 37.

feminist cinematic theory interprets the site of the screen as a feminine image of male desire, the camera as directing the audience's vision as a process of the (male) gaze, and the audience as inscribed by the phallic vision of the camera. The cinematic experience is thus structured by the logic of phalloculocentrism.

As well as the feminist theoretical framework which I explore; and the diagrams, photographs, drawings and videos which I make during this investigation; the chronology of the research process also consists of other artworks I made. I analyse a video artwork, *A Room of One's Own*, and an interactive participatory art installation, *Ocular Oracle*. These artworks are documented through photographs, and a video (see Appendix 1). The thesis also reviews a selection of feminist artists' artworks. A particular selection has been chosen to support, elaborate, and identify how my claim for a feminised form of spatiality might arise in other practitioner's artworks in the field in which my practice is situated. Martha Rosler's video artwork *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) is analysed because, in my interpretation, it potentially disrupts a domesticated image of the feminine.⁵ Louise Bourgeois' installation *Cells (Eyes and Mirrors)* (1989-93), is considered in terms of its potential subversion of the gaze through the *inter-relationality*⁶ of its contents. Mona Hotoum's video artwork *Measures of Distance* (1988) is interpreted as a potentially feminised cartographic method of deforming the (male) gaze.⁷ Pipilotti Rist's video installations are explored in the conclusion as a potential for a feminised process of immersion in the (video) apparatus in an audience's reception. *Telematic* artworks are briefly considered to review the relation between watching and the technological apparatus.

The feminine negative is taken up in this thesis to challenge her usual interpretation as a performance that mirrors the desires of the (male) gaze.⁸ The

⁵ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 136-137.

⁶ Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008).

⁷ Said, E. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1985). See also: Irigaray, L. *The Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985).

⁸ Under the (male) gaze 'the feminine is defined as the necessary complement to the operation of male sexuality, and, more often, as a negative image that provides male sexuality with an unfailingly phallic self-representation.' Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p.

plans for *(f)low visibility* attempt to dynamise representations of the feminine through a process of fragmentation, to challenge and move beyond a phalloculocentric reception of her image defined in the thesis through Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theorisation of narcissism⁹ and fetishism¹⁰ and Jean-Paul Sartre's and Jacques Lacan's theorisation of voyeurism and exhibitionism.¹¹ Phalloculocentrism is defined in the thesis in accordance with Irigaray's theorisation against it towards a proposition for feminine desire:

The *flat mirror*—which may be used for the self-reflection of the masculine subject in language, for its constitution as subject of discourse. Now woman, starting with this flat mirror alone, starting from this flat mirror alone, can only come into being as the inverted other of the masculine subject (his *alter ego*), or as the place of emergence and veiling of the cause of his (phallic) desire, or again as lack, since her sex for the most part—and the only historically valorized part—is not subject to specularization. Thus in the advent of the “feminine” desire, this flat mirror cannot be privileged and symmetry cannot function as it does in the logic and discourse of a masculine subject.¹²

I focus on critiquing phalloculocentrism from a feminist perspective because this term specifically concerns the relation between the phallus and vision (through castration anxiety).¹³ My proposition for departing from a phalloculocentric structuration of an audience's potentially (male) gaze explores how a representation of her negative subjectivity in an artwork might be encountered by them from a gyneacentric perspective as a potentially generative feminised process. Gyneacentrism's central concern is with acknowledging woman's body/sex and claiming her back from the male's

P.70. I am attempting to depart from this notion of the feminine negative towards one in which the feminine negative might be experienced as an active disruptive process of representation in the composition of images in the installation at the nightclub so as to relocate a representation of the feminine beyond the (male) gaze.

⁹ Freud, S. On Narcissism: An Introduction. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *Freud's On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991).

¹⁰ Freud, S. Fetishism. In: *Sexuality and Psychology of Love*. New York: Collier Books, (1972).

¹¹ Sartre, J-P. IV. The Look, Being-for-others, Part III. In: *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. London: Routledge, (2003), pp. 276-326. See also: Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979).

¹² Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 129.

¹³ As Lacan explains that the phallus is inextricably related to the eye, 'It is in as much as, at the heart of the experience of the unconscious, we are dealing with that organ [the phallus]—determined in the subject by the inadequacy organized in the castration complex—that we can grasp to what extent the eye is caught up in a similar dialectic'. Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998), p. 102.

system of representation of desire in order to articulate woman's own desire, sexuality and system of representation as sexually different. Further to this, gyneacentrism acknowledges the *dark continent*¹⁴ – the female sex – as a powerful site that structures feminine time, space and perception differently to the male's. Gyneacentrism considers the female sex as a process of interiorised perception, as a kind of "seeing" from within the womb, that is, from an interiorised perspective, which means to see from the perspective of woman. Irigaray argues from Freud's composition of the negative of female sexuality through to Plato's *Cave* as a possible analogy of the womb in her thesis *The Speculum of the Other Woman*. Irigaray explains gyneacentrism and the power of female sex as follows:

We need only press a little further into the depths, into that so-called dark cave which serves as hidden foundation to their speculations. For there where we expect to find the opaque and silent matrix of a logos immutable in the certainty of its own light, fires and mirrors are beginning to radiate [...] the speculum is not necessarily a mirror. It may, quite simply be an instrument to *dilate* the lips, the orifices, the walls, so that the eye can penetrate the *interior*. So that the eye can enter, to see, notably with speculative intent. Woman, having been misinterpreted, forgotten, variously frozen in show-cases, rolled up in metaphors, buried beneath carefully stylized figures, raised up in different idealities, would now become the "object" to be investigated, to be explicitly granted consideration and thereby, by this deed of title, included in the theory [...] its ultimate meaning will perhaps be discovered by tracking down what there is to be seen of female sexuality.¹⁵

My thesis develops an approach to representing feminine interiority as a method of fragmentation. This is practiced by trialing alternative ways of representing her negatively as a potentially active process of performance and imaging for participants' and an audiences' reception, through the plans, diagrams, props for, drawings and analysis of the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub. The diagrammatical plans for the installation aim to deform and interpolate phalloculocentric readings and to actively generate feminised meaning in the event of its installation (as a route to a gyneacentric praxis). This is not only a question of disrupting the legibility of representations of the feminine (as a text) under the (male) gaze of an audience, but also a question of

¹⁴ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985).

¹⁵ Irigaray, L. *The Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp.143-145.

moving beyond a semiotic register to *deform* phallogocentric readings and to activate a feminised process of meaning. I suggest this might occur through embodiment in the installation's reception. Different possibilities for the relations between the contents of the installation are explored to shift the register of interaction and reception from gazing to "touching". Embodiment is proposed as a potentially gyneacentric alternative to a phallogocentric reception of a representation of the feminine. Embodiment is defined in the thesis as a process of interiority (in accordance with Irigaray) and exteriority (in-line with Haraway¹⁶), though interiority is emphasised as this research is situated from a gyneacentric perspective. One of the ways in which this is explored is through the potential for a camera to be worn by participants (as a form of prosthesis), so that a camera might be directed by their "touch" rather than their gaze.

The thesis explores ways in which an experientially and spatially feminised process of interaction and reception might arise through:

- the fragmentation of representations of the feminine through props and on-screen images, interaction and reception;
- the division of the space of production of an artwork, so that the two sites (actual and virtual) synchronically inform each other;
- the participants' embodiment of the tools to make the artwork in the register of touch;
- the dislocation of the eye of the participant/audience from the lens of the camera and the relocation of their navigation of the feminised scene/image through touch;
- the disrupted gaze of the recipients (participants and audience) of the artwork.

An exploration of different possible compositions of *(f)low visibility* aims to find ways in which to prevent the (male) gaze of participants and an audience from resting/fixing on the image of the feminine as a site of seduction and desire. I

¹⁶ Haraway, D. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*. Vol.14, No. 3. (Autumn, 1988), p. 585.

hope to produce an *experience* of an empowered representation of the feminine through embodiment as a potentially activating process of feminised spatiality, rather than as a passive imagistic one.

Following this synoptic overview this introduction will set out the methodological, practical and theoretical basis for the thesis and give an outline of its different parts. I will especially focus on the methodology which I practiced throughout the making of the artworks and will explain their theoretical composition.

A definition of the feminine beyond the mirror of phalloculocentrism: towards embodiment

This part of the introduction focuses on unpacking the term *feminine*. I establish my approach towards sex/gender relations in order to propose a relocation of the feminine beyond a heterosexual binary construction in my proposition for exploring the potential feminisation of the contents and reception of *(f)low visibility*. In feminist and queer theory there is a debate about how one might readdress binarised inequalities. There are many dualities that construct subjectivity which set the bench mark of departure for feminism and queer theory. These are the man/woman, feminine/masculine, heterosexual/homosexual, amongst others. I focus on these oppositions here in order to explain my approach to the term which I call the feminine negative. Though I discuss how these binaries might be interpreted through a queer lens, in order to develop a new approach for feminist art practices in my field I have to depart from this view in the introduction so as to figure my practice through an Irigarayan perspective. I propose that the feminine includes queer subjectivity, as both of these subjectivities might be interpreted as being excluded from the dominant (male) paradigm. I also take into account queer theory's method of *disruption* of heteronormative (cinematic) texts and align this with my thesis' proposition for a potentially feminised form of spatiality. This could *deform* an

audience's phalloculocentric reading of a representation of the feminine as a process of *disruptive excess*.¹⁷ I depart from queer theory because of its semiotic/textual structuration of identity and representation. I then move towards developing a feminised approach to making and receiving an artwork in the register of embodiment.

In order to consider feminised and/or queer processes of reception I discuss how these subjectivities might be contextually paralleled as outsiders in a dominant (male) paradigm. Diana Fuss proposes an alignment between the feminine and queer subjectivities through her theorising. In her notion of the dominant heterosexual paradigm, (in line with Judith Butler's conception¹⁸), heterosexuality is constructed through panicked acts of repetition in identity/gender performance as an attempt to institute gender at every instant. Fuss proposes that as gender itself is an irregularly produced system of signs that it cannot coherently produce the dominant paradigm's regulatory system, that being the male/masculine, and the female/feminine, moreover, the heterosexual coupling:

And yet, if repetition is the way in which power works to construct the illusion of a seamless heterosexual identity, if heterosexuality is compelled to *repeat itself* in order to establish the illusion of its own uniformity and identity, then this is an identity permanently at risk, for what if it fails to repeat, or if the very exercise of repetition is redeployed for a very different performative purpose? If there is, as it were, always a compulsion to repeat, repetition never fully accomplishes identity. That there is a need for repetition at all is a sign that identity is not self-identical. It

¹⁷ In Irigaray's words: 'a recuperation of the feminine within a logic that maintains it in repression, censorship, nonrecognition [...] the feminine finds itself defined as lack, deficiency, or as imitation and negative image of the subject, they should signify that with respect to this logic a disruptive excess is possible on the side of the feminine. An excess that exceeds common sense only on condition that the feminine not renounce its "style".' Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 78.

¹⁸ 'If heterosexuality is an impossible imitation of itself, an imitation that performatively constitutes itself as the original, then the imitative parody of "heterosexuality"—when and where it exists in gay cultures—is always and only an imitation of an imitation, a copy of a copy, for which there is no original. Put in yet a different way, the parodic or imitative effect of gay identities works neither to copy nor to emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and panicked/imitation of its own naturalized idealization. That heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that is, that it "knows" its own possibility of becoming undone: hence, its compulsion to repeat which is at once a foreclosure of that which threatens its coherence that it can never eradicate that risk attests to its profound dependency upon the homosexuality that it seeks fully to eradicate and never can or that it seeks to make second, but which is always already there as a prior possibility.' Butler, J. *Imitation and Gender Insubordination*. (in:) Fuss, D. (ed) *Inside/Out*. New York:Routledge, (1991), pp. 22-23.

requires to be instituted again and again, which is to say that it runs the risk of becoming *de*-instituted at every interval.¹⁹

This is not only a question of gender performance but also of how this performance of gender, in instances when the marker of simulated gender/sexuality is not achieved (e.g. heterosexuality), is then mapped differently to affirm the heterosexual norm. For example, Fuss argues that this concerns what is contained inside, heterosexuality, and how this inside needs the outside, namely a queer outside, as an opposition to regulate heterosexuality as a standardised norm.²⁰ For Fuss this is a question of borders and boundaries which concerns the division of the marginalised and underrepresented *outside* from the standardised norm represented *inside*.²¹ As a development Fuss draws the analogy between the masculine/hetero interior and queer/feminine exterior.²² What Fuss suggests here is at the root of my issue with the feminine negative. This being the relation between the masculine subject and the heterosexual paradigm as positive models of identity. Fuss seems to imply that there is an imbalance of representation within the heterosexual paradigm which maintains the feminine and queer outside of it. This leads to my suggestion that perhaps the dominant regulatory system of

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 24.

²⁰ 'The philosophical opposition between "heterosexual" and "homosexual," like so many other conventional binaries, has always been constructed on the foundation of another related opposition: the couple "inside" and "outside." The metaphysics of identity that has governed discussions of sexual behavior and libidinal object choice has, until now, depended on the structural symmetry of these seemingly fundamental distinctions and the inevitability of a symbolic order based on a logic of limits, margins, borders and boundaries.' Ibid. p. 1.

²¹ 'The difference between the hetero and the homo, however, is that the homo becomes identified with the very mechanism necessary to define and defend any sexual border. Homosexuality, in a word, becomes the excluded; it stands in for, paradoxically, that which stands without. But the binary structure of sexual orientation, fundamentally a structure of exclusion and exteriorisation, nonetheless constructs that exclusion by prominently including the contaminated other in its oppositional logic. The home in relation to the hetero, much like the feminine in relation to the masculine, operates as an indispensable interior exclusion—an outside which is inside interiority making the articulation of the latter possible, a transgression of the border which is necessary to constitute the border as such.' Ibid. p. 3.

²² Carole-Anne Tyler also suggests this analogy, though she postures her concerns through a psychoanalytic framework. 'Homosexuality, like femininity, is marked by the effects of castration anxiety. Gay men, like women (including lesbians), are in the symbolic as much as heterosexual men are by virtue of phallic imposture which they can use to defend themselves from the psychosis with which both homosexuality and femininity have been associated in psychoanalysis since Freud's analysis of Schreber.' Tyler C-A, Boys will be Girls: The Politics of Gay Drag. (in) Inside/Out. (ed) Fuss, D. New York: Routledge (1991), p. 58.

representation is not best described as heterosexual at all. For if, as Fuss suggests, the feminine (with and within queerness) operates outside as an exclusion from the interior regulatory system of heterosexuality, which is proposed as a masculine construction, then perhaps the dominant paradigm is male. Based on the logic of inequalities of representation devised in Fuss' model (of the inside and the outside), it could follow that if the masculine interior dominates other genders/sexualities, the dominant paradigm might not be heterosexual at all. Perhaps there cannot be a heterosexual paradigm if the feminine is not included within the dominant paradigm itself. Following Irigaray's line of argumentation on this issue, amongst a society of men, *hom(m)o-sexuality*²³ (the homo-social) could be proposed to be the dominant practice of the original subject, the male/masculine subject, as the one which regulates all other forms of subjectivity. Therefore I propose that the thesis is not structured through a heterosexual framework. My practice based research attempts to move beyond the interior regulatory paradigm, understood here as the dominant male/masculine paradigm of *hom(m)o-sexuality*, which is defined as a phallogocentric construction in the thesis. Taking into account the difference between the sexual practice of male homosexuality and the homo-social as described in Evans and Gamman's discussion of Foucault, 'a homosexual identity or a homosexual identification, as Foucault pointed out, is very different from a homosexual act.'²⁴ Furthermore, in Irigaray's words,

reigning everywhere, although prohibited in practice, *hom(m)o-sexuality* is played out through the bodies of women, matter, or sign, and heterosexuality has been up to now just an alibi for the smooth workings of man's relation with himself, of relations among men. Whose "sociocultural endogamy" excludes the participation of that other, so foreign to the social order: women.²⁵

Interpreting the issue of gender representation through Irigaray's argument, I think that different gender constructions encounter different receptions. Even though gender can be worn differently by different bodies and

²³ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. (1985), p. 172.

²⁴ Evans E & Gamman L. Reviewing Queer Viewing. (in) H Benhoff & Griffin S. (eds) *Queer Cinema, Film Theory Reader*, New York: Routledge (2004), p. 214. (Foucault M. *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1: An introduction. Trans, Robert Hurley, Harmondsworth: Penguin, (1981), p.43.

²⁵ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. (1985), p. 172.

read differently respectively (as theorised by Butler in *Gender Trouble*²⁶), I do not think that the dominance of the masculinist paradigm can be so easily leveled between different gender performances. I propose that the problem with masculine subjectivity is that it always takes over at the expense of other subjectivities (e.g. feminine, queer, etc.), irrespective of the different composite masculine/feminine configurations that might arise in any gender performance. However, I think it is important to first consider what constitutes gender roles before the enactment of the role might be imagined. In my approach towards this issue, the role which is traditionally understood to perform through mimicry, mime, parody and masquerade, is that of the feminine. This could be both epistemologically and ideologically proposed as intrinsic to feminine/feminised subjectivities' processes. However, the contents of her performances in a phalloculocentric structure is never driven by her own desire, but is predicated on performing and acting out male desire for his pleasure. So, developing this phalloculocentric definition of the feminine negative further, the feminine can be thought of as a method of performance in which the contents of the act do not belong to her. The form (performance) is feminised but the contents of the performance (desire) are masculinised in the dominant paradigm as she is maintained as a poor copy of the original subject. I am framing exhibitionism, the masquerade and hysteria as processes which systemically determine how the feminine appears and circulates as an image which is empty of her own desire.²⁷

I am positing, through Irigaray's theories, that the feminine is absent from the economy of subjectivity in as much as queer subjectivity might be too. The term feminine negative as defined in the thesis includes queer subjectivity. The thesis attempts to explore the ways in which a feminised method might arise through making artwork, investigating how to dislocate her from a phalloculocentric system of representation and to relocate her in terms of her

²⁶Butler, J. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, (2006).

²⁷ 'A woman. A body-matter marked by their (men's/male's/masculine) signifiers, a prop for their souls-fantasies. The place where their encoding as speaking subjects is inscribed and where the "objects" of their desire are projected.' Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. (1985), p. 96.

own subjectivities' specificities. I propose to explore how the installation might gesture a feminine form of syntax, in Irigaray's words:

What feminine syntax might be is not simple or easy to state, because in that "syntax" there would no longer be either subject or object, "oneness" would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings, proper names, "proper" attributes [...] I think that the best place where it could be deciphered is in the gestural code of women's bodies.²⁸

The gestural codes in women's bodies might be posited as a process in which her subjectivity is sent *elsewhere*, beyond the binary negative, using the outsidership of the feminine (queer) subjectivity as a potentially generative process of spatiality. I propose that this could alter an audience's usual encounter with a negative representation of her in an artwork. With this approach and method in view, the thesis asks: How can the feminine be maintained at a distance from her image? How can an image of the feminine be represented in an artwork without her image being subordinated by the very act of becoming imaged? How can a different approach be established in representing the feminine when woman cannot know her own image (as viewer/spectator) on her terms? For, if she is too close to her image there is a possibility of collapsing into it, and as the viewer (voyeur) or as the performer of femininity how can she avoid being trapped in an image which is not her own? How might a participatory process of making *(f)low visibility* reference the feminine negative? How might this process be experienced by an audience?

These questions' systemic concern seems to be rooted in how a subjectivity outside the dominant paradigm might interrupt his system of representation, these questions then are predicated on a methodological issue. How can a representation of the feminine alter her usual reception in a phallogocentric register? This question leads me to consider queer theory's method of disruption of heteronormative (film) texts in my thesis' proposition for the feminine's potential to deform an audience's phallogocentric reading of an artwork that represents the feminine. I am proposing that the feminine might be encountered by an audience as an illegible representation. How might this

²⁸ Ibid. p. 134.

process arise? In queer theory the process of queer readings are predicated on incoherencies in representations of queerness as a process of incoherent identity²⁹ and gender formation. This manifests in a performance that is difficult to read, both because of the oscillating positions of the one who performs and the spectator.³⁰ In this way queer theory argues that this troubles the heteronormative structure of a (e.g. Hollywood cinema) text. Queer theory claims that a fluid approach to sexual identity provides greater possibilities/potentialities for reading against the grain. “Queer” representations seem to share in common with the feminine³¹ the capacity to disturb stable definitions’.³² So for example, countering essentialism, queer theory tends to identify queer instances in a film’s narrative through cinematic experience as those which resist being pinned down or fixed in any one location within it. For example, in Burns’ discussion of ‘John Brahm’s 1946 film *The Locket*’³³ she explains that ‘when lesbian returns in *The Locket*—which it does repeatedly—it returns precisely as the trauma that signals the failure of cinema’s repetitions to produce a narrative unmarked by “chronological mistakes”’.³⁴

I consider queer theory’s deconstructionist method of disruption in my exploration of representing the feminine in an artwork because this process also participates in disrupting the legibility of an image in a phallogocentric register. Disrupting the (male) gaze and reading of an image might be considered one

²⁹ ‘Queer rides that line of needing to be identified as not identifiable. It must be something we can talk and write about, something we feel we can recognize, without ever settling into the kind of punctual coordinates of conventional Renaissance to contemporary conceptions of the subject as situated in a coherent site of knowledge.’ Jones A, *Seeing Differently – A history and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts*. London: Routledge, (2012), p.176.

³⁰ ‘Then the extraordinary usefulness of queer incoherence for consolidating, paradoxically lesbian and gay specificity will emerge most clearly in analytical situations in which such “specificity” can be articulated as historically emergent, on the threshold of tentative definition.’ Savoy E. *That ain’t all she ain’t*. (in) *Outtakes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*. (ed) Hanson E, Durham: Duke University Press (1999), p. 154.

³¹ ‘Woman does not exist owing to the fact that language—a language—rules as master, and that she threatens—as a sort of “prediscursive reality”—to disrupt its order’. Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 89.

³² Evans E & Gamman L. *Reviewing Queer Viewing*. (in) H Benhoff & Griffin S. (eds) *Queer Cinema, Film Theory Reader*, New York: Routledge (2004), p. 218.

³³ Burns B. *Cassandra’s Eyes*. (in) *Outtakes*, (ed) Hanson E, Durham: Duke University Press (1999), p. 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 140.

aspect of queer theory's aim. However, my thesis also aims to generate an experience of feminised meaning through an artwork, *(f)low visibility*, for an audience's reception. Though I support the method of disruption of phallogocentric text carried out through queer readings, I find its claim for *incoherence* (of identity and representation) problematic because the outsider is less visible/audible and always already incoherent in the dominant paradigm. This is especially the case for feminine subjectivity because as the hysteric, and as the performer of the masquerade, she is a silent image that already incoherently mimes a phallogocentric structure of desire/representation.

If feminisation is considered through the negative as a generative process, perhaps the *queer gaze* could propose a productive form of disruption? Returning to Burns' analysis of the film *The Locket* she says,

The remarkable appearance of this painting at this moment of crisis stunningly registers the inability of the visual system finally to close its eyes forever to the image of excess that has attached to lesbian desire throughout *The Locket*. What Cassandra's eyes see is precisely what the cinema remains unable to say, that lesbian desire circulates, like an irresistible jewel, not only beyond the field of vision, but more crucially, within it.³⁵

I think that here Burns potentially identifies feminised markers of meaning in the narrative of *The Locket* as a way of disturbing heterosexual identifications. I think that her discussion of the disruption of the phallogocentric system of representation might be interpreted as being triggered by excess on the side of the feminine in a lesbian context of gazing. Though this is a productive example of how a queer gaze might arise in cinematic experience – I am not proposing to subvert the (male) gaze with other gazes. I am not, for example, proposing to introduce a feminised gaze. My thesis proposes to explore the potential for an audience's feminised embodied experience of a representation of the feminine in which their encounter is not determined as a proviso for gazing and ordering perspectival space. The thesis researches a potential for an encounter that affords a (feminised) process of perception and spatiality in *(f)low visibility*.

³⁵ Ibid.

In order to move beyond situating identity as a fluid textual process determined by incoherencies and gazes, I focus on a process of embodiment to take into account the *felt* experience of the body through Irigaray's theories on the (maternal-) feminine.³⁶ In this way my approach to the question of representation of subjectivity significantly differs from the majority of queer theorists' (and feminists') approaches to subjectivity. Queer theory tends to frame the body as a purely textual process, as a sign which erases the sexed body from the context of subjectivity formation. I believe that this disconnect is problematic, this is not to say that biological essentialism should be restored but that 'the complex interfaces between the values encoded in bodies and identities'³⁷ should be re-examined. (Though there is not enough scope here in the thesis to tackle this issue at large.) My approach participates in the phenomenological (and feminised) method of the research, underpinned by a gyneacentric approach to the feminine, in an attempt to afford generative meaning at a pre-symbolic level in an audience's reception of an artwork. Though the meaning I intend to afford in a representation of the feminine in an artwork may not be legible, this is not to say that her representation will be incoherent either, but rather crucially, that she might be *felt/touched*. Altering the register of an audience's encounter with a representation of the feminine from gazing to touching not only acknowledges embodiment but potentially also

³⁶ It is important to note here that there is a rift in queer theory in relation to theories on transsexuality because of the disconnect between the body and gender emphasised in queer theory (in the strand that follows Butler). Hennessy discusses Prosser's analysis of queer theory in terms of the representation of the transsexual body in terms of the difference between transsexual experience and the way in which their body is received by others. 'Prosser's analysis is also a critical reading, re-reading, of the social constructionist paradigm that overtook theories of gender in the past twenty years or so, a paradigm spurred on by the publication of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* in 1990. [...] Along with other transsexual critics, he emphasizes that the unfortunate effect has been to replace the scientific concept of gender as the expression of a natural core identity with a new understanding of gender as a purely discursive reiterative practice. Lost in this account of gender which has so comprehensively influenced queer studies, is the relation between psyche and body in shaping gender identity. Sven Brandenburg, another theorist of transsexual identity, argues that queer theory was incapable of accounting for the irreconcilable gap between the felt gendered perception (gender identity) of the transsexual and the visual perception of the body that stands in contrast to it.' Hennessy, R. *The Value of a Second Skin*. (In) *Intersections Between Feminism and Queer Theory*. (eds) Richardson D, McLaughlin J, Casey M. E, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, (2006), pp. 120-121.

³⁷ Ibid.

methodologically acknowledges a sexually different approach to a process of knowing and understanding a representation of the feminine in terms of her own subjectivities' specificity, this being a question of her desire.

I propose that a multiplicitous process of referencing the feminine might disrupt the unitary tendency of the (male) gaze in an audience's reception. Following Irigaray's theorising, rather than determining the feminine negatively; as illegible, as zero in relation to the masculine as the inscriber of the positive (masculine) subject, as one holistic subject, I suggest that the feminine's unrepresentability might instead be interpreted as incurring a multiplicitous subjective process. In Chaudhuri's reflection on Irigaray's work she says:

In *This Sex Which is Not One* (1977), Irigaray tries to describe the different economy of female desire in terms of the female form. Unlike the male organ, the female sex is not 'one' but several – with vulva and lips that are always touching each other. Her vision of feminine language hangs on this model of multiplicity, contiguity, and simultaneity, valorizing the sense of touch over sight.³⁸

However, I am not proposing to 'fix' the potential for an audience's experience of a representation of feminine subjectivity in these terms; the process of participant interaction cannot *evidence* the feminine. I am not proposing to reconceptualise the feminine either. I am attempting to make artworks that aim to provide a potentially feminised experience from the perspective of sexual difference, in Irigaray's words:

Can anyone, can I, elaborate another, a different concept of femininity? There is no question of another concept of femininity. To claim that the feminine can be expressed in the form of a concept is to allow oneself to be caught up again in a system of "masculine" representations, in which women are trapped in a system of meaning which serves the auto-affection of the (masculine) subject. If it is really a matter of calling "femininity" into question, there is still no need to elaborate another "concept"—unless a woman is renouncing her sex and wants to speak like men. For the elaboration of a theory of woman, men, I think suffice. In a woman('s) language, the concept as such would have no place.³⁹

Rather than tracing an image of the feminine my research proposes to navigate through different plans for, and the installation of *(f)low visibility* as a way of tacitly mapping a potentially tactile and spatial experience of the feminine in the

³⁸ Chaudhuri S, *Feminist Film Theorists* Mulvey, Silverman, Laurettis, Creed. London: Routledge, (2006), p. 57.

³⁹ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp. 122-123.

thesis. Throughout the thesis I ask how a feminised sense of space might arise. This is not only a question of how the process of interaction might be delineated by a set of objects for interaction in the design of the installation (through diagrams), but rather this question concerns where the point of interaction, or as John Berger says in his definition of an image, ‘the point of interest’⁴⁰, might be in the installation’s reception. In this way the thesis also explores where a feminised representation and encounter might arise in the installation.

Thesis Summary

The thesis is divided into three parts. *Part 1* works through the problematic of phallogocentrism, against which my artworks in the thesis are pitted. I work through the problematical way in which the feminine negative is constructed under the (male) gaze as a reflection of male desire. *Part 1, Diagram 1*, the first diagram for the installation *(f)low visibility* in the thesis, sets out an enquiry into how images of the feminine might be made through an interactive process; questioning how the feminine can be imaged without being subjected to the (male) gaze.⁴¹ The related problems of fetishism, narcissism, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and castration anxiety, which together connect vision and woman as phallic site/sight, are also dealt with in the process of interpreting *Diagram 1*. *Part 1* concludes with *A Room of One’s Own* (a video artwork I made), in which the process of watching an image of the feminine is problematised between the performer (a woman) in the video and the video apparatus. This video proposes to fragment an image of the feminine so as to subvert the (male) gaze of an audience. The potential for a fragmentation of phallogocentric reading in an

⁴⁰ Berger, J. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, (1977).

⁴¹ ‘The flat mirror—which may be used for the self-reflection of the masculine subject in language, for its constitution as subject of discourse. Now woman, starting with this flat mirror alone, starting from this flat mirror alone, can only come into being as the inverted other of the masculine subject (his alter ego), or as the place of emergence and veiling of the cause of his (phallic) desire, or again as lack, since her sex for the most part—and the only historically valorized part—is not subject to specularization. Thus in the advent of the “feminine” desire, this flat mirror cannot be privileged and symmetry cannot function as it does in the logic and discourse of a masculine subject.’ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 129.

audience's reception of an artwork is also discussed through Rosler's video, *Semiotic of the Kitchen*.

Part 2 reflects on *Diagram 1*'s potential failure to subvert the gaze and proposes a different orientation of the installation in *Diagram 2*. *Part 2* proposes that a feminisation of the installation might arise through a process of inter-relationality between its contents. A possible process of feminine spatiality might arise by accumulating references to the feminine. Inter-relationality is drawn through an analysis of Bourgeois' piece *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* as a potential subversion of the site of woman as the dark continent. I explore this possibility through proposing to open-up the audience and participant viewing spaces to each other, in *Diagram 2*, so that they might equally view each other, moreover, so that they can inter-relate. I also explore the possibility of reorientating the camera in *Diagram 2*, so that it might distribute its area of capture evenly. I further question this in *Diagram X* by proposing to position a miniature camera on a fetus-like prop, as a potential marker for the possibility of encountering the installation from a gyneacentric perspective. The relation between the look and interaction in a video imaging apparatus and viewers' interaction in interactive video arts practices is also discussed in this part of the thesis. In the concluding section of *Part 2* I flesh out the problem of the representation of the feminine in a video image through Hatoum's artwork *Measures of Distance*. Through this artwork I suggest a possible feminised cartographic process in which absence and multiplicity might be considered as potential excesses in a feminised process of representation.

Part 3 then further develops *Diagram 1*, *Diagram 2*, and *Diagram X* by introducing *Diagram 3*. *Diagram 3* proposes that cameras might be worn by participants, producing partially locatable perspectives in a process of image production and audience reception, as a new practice of feminine spatiality. *Part 3* concludes with *Diagram 4*, which maps the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub through a collection of images, drawings, diagrams and photographs, and claims embodied and enfleshed perception in the register of touch as a

possible solution to the problems of receiving an image of the feminine as an active representation. The conclusion then develops the claim for the thesis on *(f)low visibility*'s interaction and reception of references to the feminine as a process of navigating a cyborg image of the fantasy of intrauterine "touching" and vision. My claim is drawn out through my observation and analysis of the installation in the nightclub and intertwines and moves beyond Haraway's and Irigaray's concepts of embodiment. The conclusion applies my practice-led research's proposition for feminised spatiality to Rists' artwork and also proposes how the research might be further extended through my art practice.

I will now give a synopsis of each of the three parts of the thesis, as a general outline of the practical and theoretical support of the thesis, and methodological overview.

Part 1

Part 1 of the thesis begins by describing *Diagram 1* which is a plan for the proposal of the installation, *(f)low visibility*. *(f)low visibility* entails participant interaction in an enclosed room which contains props that represent woman's body parts and a camera with a live-feed to a screen outside the room. I compose *Diagram 1* through a psychoanalytic framework, outlining the problems of the epistemological and ontological structure of the masculine/male hegemony of the visible by way of the gaze in phalloculocentric theory.⁴²

In *Part 1* I critique and confront this regime in an attempt to establish an alternative trajectory, both conceptually and through my practice, towards a gyneacentric perspective. Throughout the thesis I map out different possible relations between the installation's contents in an attempt to test who/what might take-up the (male) gaze in the installation in relation to who/what may take-up the feminine position as image. *Diagram 1* presents this problem. This

⁴² Phalloculocentrism is a term used by Irigaray to critique the structural subordination of the feminine to the masculine in Jacques Lacan's discourse on desire. Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998).

relation is exercised in terms of voyeurism and exhibitionism (according to Lacan's definition)⁴³ in order to counter phalloculocentrism's construction of the feminine's disempowerment in the visible as *his* negative image in *Diagram 1*.

Part 1 introduces and discusses cinematic and apparatus theory⁴⁴ to discuss the diagrams that plan *(f)low visibility* and its installation in a nightclub. *Part 1* also critiques the position of the camera in *Diagram 1* in terms of the structure of surveillance apparatus. The problems dealt with in *Part 1* directly relate to my attempt to produce a feminine form of perception which undoes and deforms the gaze's structuration of the feminine as an image of male desire. I discuss the way in which surveillance apparatus is composed through socio-cultural determinants which constitute it through the logic of invisibilities. Through this I discuss surveillance apparatus as a deceptive mediator of the visible truth. I further discuss this through surveillance apparatus' relationship to capture and the possession of the disempowered other (e.g. the surveillance camera's capture of the unsuspecting public) as analogous to the structure of phalloculocentrism, i.e. the (male) gaze's structuration and capture of the feminine. I draw this analogy in order to further explore the role of the disempowered *other*, the female/woman/feminine, in relation to the socio-cultural construction of surveillance apparatus because I think that the logic of the (surveillance) camera/lens is one of phallic vision.

Confronting the theoretical problems encountered in cinematic experience and surveillance apparatus, *Part 1* attempts to readdress perception in the register of *sexuate difference*⁴⁵ (rather than as a hom(mo)-sexual and phalloculocentric structure). Offering a possible solution to the conceptual framework of *Diagram 1*, I propose and develop the representation of the negative in the *feminine masquerade*. I discuss the feminine masquerade through *Diagram 1* due to its proposed relation of contents between what I determine as the (feminised) interior (represented by the enclosed room, props

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Rosen, P. (ed.) *Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986). See also: Bainbridge, C. *A Feminine Cinematics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2008).

⁴⁵ Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008).

and participants) and the exteriorising process of the (male) gaze (represented by the screen outside the enclosed room, and the audience). I question the possible reception and production proposed in *Diagram 1*, specifically between the enclosed room and the screen outside the room. I propose this could be a possible model of the feminine masquerade's duality between her invisible interiority and her exterior appearances as potentially becoming evident to the viewer through an encounter with both sites. However, *Part 1* finds that rather than enabling this positive trajectory towards a potential process of sexually differentiated perception, the proposed set-up of *Diagram 1* appears to affirm a phalloculocentric structure because of the way in which it proposes to fetishise participants. In *Part 1*, *Diagram 1* serves to exercise and bring to the fore the problematic construction of the (male) gaze in order to find a different way to subvert the potential relation of the look in the plan for the nightclub installation.

In the conclusion to *Part 1* the problematic composition of *Diagram 1* is addressed through a video artwork, *A Room of One's Own*. I propose that fragmentation of the image of the feminine could occur through referencing different signifiers that mark out the feminine in the scene's set in the (video) image through a disruptive process. I propose that this process of fragmentation of the image proceeds 'in such a way that linear reading is no longer possible'⁴⁶ in my artworks in the thesis. I therefore aim to make images of woman that do not cohere into one continuous and graspable image. Instead I propose that she is composed of fragments and could potentially disrupt a phalloculocentric reading of an image in my artworks. I explore Lacan's definition of the (male) gaze through the different possible relations of looking in the video. I consider these relations of looking in terms of appearance and disappearance of the representation of woman as an image under the (male) gaze to explore how the woman becomes a *screen*.⁴⁷ I propose that *A Room of One's Own* sets up the notion of feminised space in the thesis and begins to develop questions concerning the relation of the look of the recording apparatus and the audience.

⁴⁶ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 80

⁴⁷ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998) pp. 97.

This sets the tone towards exploring the possibility for encountering the feminine on-screen without maintaining the structure of the (male) gaze.

Part 2

Part 2 is concerned with critiquing the impasse of *Diagram 1* and proposing a solution to it. In order to avoid *Diagram 1*'s proposition for one-sided-watching *Diagram 2* attempts to establish watching from multiple perspectives, opening out the enclosed room so that the participants and audiences could be visible to each other. I propose that this new set-up could enable the contents of the installation to inter-relate between the two sites (scaffolding area and on-screen image). Opening up the possibility of inter-relational *exchanges* between the installation's contents, I propose that the audience might observe both the scaffolding-area and the screen at the same time, meaning that the (male) look could be disrupted as the audience's gaze might shift between the two sites. I explore how an audience's shifting look between the two sites could mean that the audience's relation to the camera might be disrupted and could therefore prevent the camera from inscribing the audience's gaze from a singular perspective.

The issue here, however, not only concerns the audience's reception of the participants' image but also what the props reference, this being crucial in setting the tone of participant interaction in the installation of *(f)low visibility* at the nightclub. In *Part 2* the props representation is altered as the proposal for representing female body parts may not have been able to escape the construction of the feminine under the (male) gaze as a fetish object. *Part 2* introduces the notion of the *monstrous*⁴⁸ in order to subvert the construction of the feminine as *normal woman* in accordance with Freud's theorising. This subversion is explored through my analysis of Bourgeois' artwork, *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*, which I interpret through the myth of *Perseus and Medusa* and

⁴⁸ Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993).

Freud's analyses of the myth. I develop an interpretation of Medusa as a representation of a monstrous castrating force which represents the inability to look at the ineffable, that is, the dark continent of feminine sexuality. I explore how the inability to look at the feminine is dealt with in *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* through the way in which the feminine is not directly represented, but rather negatively referenced. Dynamising the gaze's aversion, I develop monstrous props through a conceptual analysis of the feminine negative through the boundary, margin, and the between. I propose that the monstrous representation of the feminine could actively reference *maternal-feminine*⁴⁹ interiority in the installation in the nightclub. A crucial part of this process of establishing what I will call a gyneacentric perspective, a way of seeing from within the maternal body, is equipping a monstrous foetus prop with a camera, potentially gesturing the on-screen image as a site that references maternal-feminine interiority (the womb). *Diagram X* proposes to resituate the position of the camera by moving away from the static phalloculocentric set-up in *Diagrams 1* and *2*. I also discuss interactive video arts practices (*Telematic Artworks*) to discern how other arts practices concerned with participation and video structure the relations between the apparatus, the participants, and the audience's gaze, through processes of interaction and image making. In my conclusion to *Part 2* I interpret Hatoum's video artwork, *Measures of Distance*, to introduce a feminised cartographic approach to a fragmented representation of the feminine moving towards developing my claim for feminising an audience's reception of an artwork.

Part 3

Part 3 proposes a solution to the hegemony of the (male) gaze instituted through the camera's situation in *Diagrams 1, 2* and *X*. *Diagram 3* suggests that participants should control the camera, providing participants and an audience

⁴⁹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), pp. 135 – 136.

with multiple contexts for watching and observing both inside and outside the installation, and to make those positions partially locatable through a camera worn by participants as a form of prosthetic touching/vision. *Diagram 3* proposes a potentially new relation to the camera that debunks *Diagrams 1, 2 and X's* situation of the passive spectator (participants) by affording the possibility for active participation and for the reception of an image by an audience, to be registered as a process of "touching". I claim that the navigation of an image by the participants' hands means that, in turn, the camera's lens and the eyes of the audience/participants might be displaced.

Part 3 also concerns the emergence of *Diagram 4*, which maps the instalment of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub. *Diagram 4* disrupts the diagrams in the thesis further by presenting many versions of the instalment of *(f)low visibility*, mapping the causeway to deformation, disruption and fragmentation as a register of feminised perception and spatiality in the installation.

I conclude my analysis of *(f)low visibility* through theories of cinematic experience. This analysis concerns how inter-relationality arose between the two sites in the installation through the participants' and audience's body and the on-screen image. I propose that an understanding of an image of the feminine (as a feminised form of spatial multiplicity), was led by participants through their simultaneous navigation of different (actual and virtual) spaces. I claim that the (male) gaze may have been de-centred in this process of interaction as a consequence of the double tactile looking that may have accrued between the fragmented monstrous props' imaging on-screen, the participants' encounter with them, and their prosthetic detection of the props. Guided by their hands, I interpret participants navigation of the prosthetic camera and the on-screen image, composed of cyborg images of maternal-feminine interiority, as a potentially embodied way of exploring an emergent feminised space. Further to this, I suggest through my observation and analysis

that the audience (and participants) may have experienced the on-screen image as a process of the fantasy of (tangible⁵⁰) intrauterine “touching”.

The conclusion to the thesis also proposes that the exploration of feminine spatiality from a gyneacentric perspective might also be identified in Rist’s video artworks and be further explored beyond the thesis through my interactive video performance piece *Ocular Oracle*.

⁵⁰ ‘The two maps of the visible and the tangible are not completely situated the one in the other and the other in the one. If one were to “situate”, it would be the tangible. [...The tangible] is never completely situated in the visible’. Ibid. p. 137.

Part 1: DIAGRAM 1

Diagram 1 — Plan

Installation & Moving-Image Based Artwork

(f)low visibility, the art installation I installed in a fetish nightclub, took place in 2008 for one evening. The thesis sets out the planning stages for the installation in the nightclub through diagrams in preparation for the event of the installation. The DVD documentation of the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub can be found in Appendix 1. In this section I introduce *Diagram 1*, the first plan for the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub; it orientates the central concern leading my investigation into how the (male) gaze might be subverted in creating images of the feminine through participant interaction and audience reception. My central question is: in order to subvert the (male) gaze of the camera (in video apparatus) how can my artworks' spatial composition and audience/participant perception be registered as a potentially *feminine* process? *Diagram 1* introduces and presents the problem of the *gaze's* structuration through voyeurism and exhibitionism, in terms of viewing and being viewed. This plan, for *(f)low visibility*, attempts to subvert the usual configuration of the (male) gaze in order to explore a way to actively image the feminine through participant and audience reception.

I imagine that the installation could be situated in a confined space; in a room in which participants might interact with props (representing female body parts) whilst being videoed by a camera relaying the unfolding scene within the room onto a screen outside that room. The live-feed from the camera would be projected onto a screen outside the room so that any passers-by (audience) could see the activity occurring in the isolated room. (Refer to *Diagram 1*).

The installation, described in *Diagram 1*, is devised as a stage-set for performance, participant interaction and audience reception. I divided the installation space drawn in *Diagram 1* between the enclosed room for participant

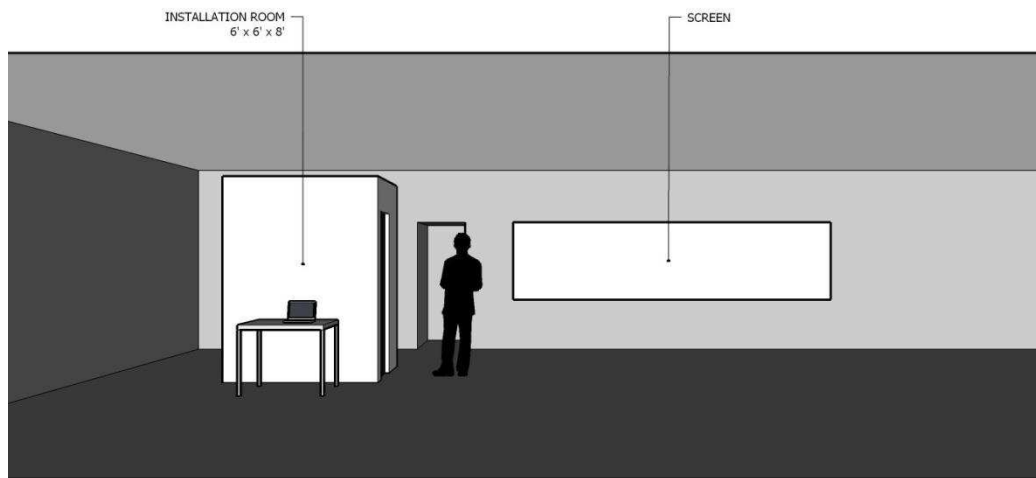


Fig. i. Diagram 1.

interaction and the screen outside the room for audience reception in order to address the notion of watching and being watched. I chose to situate the installation in a fetish nightclub because I am investigating how my artwork challenges the structure of the voyeur's (male) gaze and (woman's) exhibitionism.⁵¹ I am taking specific issue with Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the look (in Sartre's theorising) as a gaze that I interpret as a male orientated perspective that structures the visible. Meanwhile, I intend to propose a feminine process of perception which moves beyond her binary structuration. I take issue with the structure of the (male) gaze in *castration anxiety*⁵² (which will be explained in depth in the section *Fetishism*) and the way it constructs woman as an absent *non-subject*. I think that Lacan structures the (male) voyeur as seeking the absence of the phallus in the visible. Lacan designates woman as the site of the phallus. Lacan discusses Sartre's theory of the gaze, saying that:

What he is trying to see, make no mistake, is the object as absence. What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind the curtain. [...] What he is looking for is not, as one says, the phallus – but precisely its absence.⁵³

In Lacan's model of the (male) gaze the voyeur observes the exhibitionist (a role that he designates to woman) through the keyhole. The exhibitionist is situated as an image which the voyeur gazes at. The exhibitionist, woman, can never realise herself through the act of seeing, because she can only appear as image through being seen by another. Whether man or woman, the other that sees always sees from the standpoint of the (male) gaze and is the one that possesses the look (through the keyhole). The phallus is privileged in this economy of seeing as a process of appearance and disappearance because the woman represents the site of *castration anxiety*. The image of woman is seen by the voyeur through perversion. According to Lacan, the image of woman is also an imagined image, meaning that she cannot emerge as a coherent

⁵¹ Sartre, J-P. IV. The Look, Being-for-others, Part III. In: Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology. London: Routledge, (2003), pp. 276-326.

⁵² Freud, S. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. In: Kul-Want, C. (ed.) Philosophers on Art from Kant to Postmodernists. New York: Columbia University Press, (2010), p. 88.

⁵³ Lacan, J. Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 182.

subjectivity because she cannot be represented outside his system of representation. In phallic vision the image of woman cannot be fixed, it is always subject to appearances and disappearances. Woman's body is figured as a phallic site because in castration anxiety the boy images her as a phallus in order to cope with the fact that her body represents the threat of castration. Woman's phallic body is constructed in the visible through the logic of phallocentrism:

In exhibitionism what is intended by the subject is what is realized in the other. The true aim of desire is the other, as constrained, beyond his involvement in the scene.⁵⁴

The voyeur is constructed as having the power to gaze/look/see, which is perverted and therefore affords access to *his* version of desire. The exhibitionist composes herself so as to be seen by him, she images herself as *his* version of desire, meaning that she cannot return the look. Woman's desire cannot emerge in a phallocentric system of representation because, at best, she can only mime his desire; the woman is thus maintained as his image and is incapable of representing herself in the visible. The problematic representation of feminine subjectivity as mimic is constructed by the dominant male paradigm. Structured by phallocentrism she can only appear in the visible under his gaze; she cannot emerge in language either, because phallocentrism also maintains her as a reflection of his discourse. The dominant male paradigm then structures female subjectivity as a reflection of his system of representation, through imaging and the symbolic. My aim is to challenge this system of representation in order to explore how a process of experiencing the feminine in her own terms might emerge through an audience's reception of an artwork.

Elaborating the feminine negative further, the feminine emerges as the *hysteric*,⁵⁵ because she is silenced in his system of symbolicity. The hysteric represents the ineffability of woman.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 183.

⁵⁵ Lacan: 'The silent girl, is, as was only to be expected, that of the hysteric. Now, the differential feature of the hysteric is precisely this—it is in the very movement of speaking that the hysteric constitutes her desires.' Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books,

Hysteria: it speaks in the mode of paralyzed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also a forbidden speech... It speaks as *symptoms* of an "it can't speak to or about itself" ... And the drama of hysteria is that it is inserted schizotically between that gestural system, that desire paralyzed and enclosed within its body, and a language that it has learned in the family, in school, in society, which is in no way continuous with—nor, certainly, a metaphor for—the "movements" of its desire. Both mutism and mimicry are then left to hysteria.⁵⁶

(*Hysteric*) woman can neither appear in her own terms nor speak from her own position of desire. In some ways the *hysteric* exemplifies the feminine negative's subjectivity that remains pre-symbolic as a mute image that mimes male desire.

In an attempt to address the representation of the feminine through a cartographic process I challenge the sexed/gendered roles of (male) looking and (female) being looked at in artworks and the diagrammatical plans for (*f*)/*low visibility*. In order to subvert the (male) gaze in the design of the installation I intend to work through different possible orientations of looking that might be configured between an audience, participants and cameras through diagrams. This exploration of different possible looks is carried out through plans for the installation in an attempt to compose it through a feminised perceptual register, so as to make images for an audience which might be interpreted as representing the *feminine negative* productively. *Part 1* of the thesis demonstrates how the position of the feminine negative functions as a process of the non-subject par excellence in relation to the positive subject (man). I attempt to compose the feminine negative, differently in the course of the thesis, as a potentially active site, rather than as a passive subjective process; so as to move beyond her usual binarised representation in the dominant male paradigm. Irigaray explains this issue as follows,

Psychoanalytic discourse on female sexuality is the discourse of truth. A discourse that tells the truth about the logic of truth: namely, that *the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects*. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one. A single practice and representation of the sexual. With its history, its requirements, reverses, lacks, negative(s)... of which the female sex is the mainstay. This model, a phallic one, shares the values promulgated by

(1979), p. 112. See also: Irigaray's critique of the hysteric in: Irigaray, L. Questions. In: *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp. 119-169.

⁵⁶ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp.136-137.

patriarchal society and culture, values inscribed in the philosophical corpus: property, production, order, form, unity, visibility... and erection.⁵⁷

The feminine is constructed as an absent subjectivity that is a negative counterpoint to the male subject who is the original potent subject in a phallogocentric structure. Therefore, my diagrammatical plans for the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub aim to explore processes of making images of the feminine in order to subvert the usual phallogocentric reading of such images. This will be carried out so that an audience and the participants might experience the images in the register of the feminine, as opposed to encountering her image as a construction of male desire. Irigaray proposes that the process of mimicry might be an embodied way for a feminine form of language to emerge, through which masculine language might be deformed and disrupted by the exaggeration of the very feminine role assigned to her. Irigaray argues that this might be possible by way of re-appropriating and deliberately performing the feminine role.

There is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one “path,” the one historically assigned to the feminine: that of mimicry. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it.⁵⁸

With this in mind I am approaching *Diagram 1*’s proposal for the installation in the nightclub as a kind of theatre for performance. Through imagining participant interaction with props that represent female body parts in the enclosed room, *Diagram 1* aims to stage the displacement of the participants’ desire for the female onto the object (woman as *objet petit a*, as *not-all*⁵⁹) as a representation of the desire for the feminine as a negative figuration. I also investigate how participants might respond to the props in relation to the screen,

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.86.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 76

⁵⁹ ‘Women are in a position of exclusion [...] Their exclusion is internal to an order from which nothing escapes: the order of man’s discourse. To the objection that this discourse is perhaps not all there is, the response will be that it is woman who are “not-all” [...] Moreover, it is inasmuch as she does not exist that she sustains the desire of these “speaking beings” that are called men: “A man seeks woman [...] owing to something that is located only in discourse, since, if what I am suggesting is true, namely that woman is not-all, there is always something in her which escapes discourse.” Man seeks her out, since he has inscribed her in discourse, but as lack, as fault or flaw’. Ibid. pp.88-89.

through processes of narcissism and fetishism, with regard to the sexual objectification of women. Due to the fetish nightclub's culture of voyeurism and exhibitionism, it should provide my installation with a context for a particular form of reception in which attendees might be predisposed to acts of looking, and watching, and making a spectacle of themselves. Moreover, the issue is one of unpacking the power relations inherent in watching, of who looks and who is looked at, which are, in my interpretation, traditionally bound-up in the (male) gaze. Thus I intend to set-up the installation in the nightclub as I believe that the context will exaggerate and highlight this activity. Hence, in *Diagram 1*, the unfolding scenario in the enclosed room could be displayed on a screen outside the room in order to investigate an audience's look in relation to the participants.

I intend to set-up the installation to challenge conventional processes of looking and being looked at, specifically in terms of the feminine as a site to look at, as image par excellence; and the male as the *normal* position from which the gaze is structured.⁶⁰ In *Diagram 1* I intend to disrupt this figuration of the feminine as an image that appears in the visible as a version of male desire by situating props that represent woman's body in the enclosed room for participant interaction. Their activity in the enclosed room would be displayed through a live-video feed on a screen outside the room for an audiences' viewing. I propose that the sites of looking and being looked at might be displaced through the camera's deference of the site looked at (in the on-screen image regarded by an audience) from the site captured (by the camera in the enclosed room).

Through my plans for the installation in the nightclub and my analysis of the installation in the nightclub my thesis aims to disrupt the look of the voyeur and the situation of the exhibitionist by disrupting the usual context of these looks through a consideration of the site captured and the reception of the image which is discussed in *Part 1* through *Diagram 1*. This proposed disruption

⁶⁰ I explore this construction of the look further in the next section Narcissism, through Laura Mulvey's discussion of the to-be-looked-at-ness of the woman. Mulvey, L. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Rosen, P. (ed.) Narrative Apparatus Ideology. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 203.

explores a way to challenge the conventions of (male) looking and to map a way towards a potentially feminine form of perception, whereby the very disruption of the look enables feminine perception and spatiality to actively emerge, with a view to move beyond the traditional representation of the feminine as a site of capture or male desire. I propose that by disrupting the look of an audience and the participants that they may not be able to fix their (male) gaze onto the image of the feminine. I think that the disruption of the look and the fragmentation of the image of the feminine might occur through a process of making, that is, through a process of audience/participant interaction. My proposal to processually disrupt the look in the installation is developed in order to find a way to prevent the look from unifying from a singular perspective, with this in view I explore ways in which a fragmented image of the feminine might be composed and received. The notion of disruption discussed here is developed through Irigaray's theorising on the question of the feminine:

How, then, are we to try to redefine this [masculine] language work that would leave space for the feminine? Let us say that every dichotomizing—and at the same time redoubling—break, including the one between enunciation and utterance, has to be disrupted. Nothing is ever to be posited.⁶¹

For these reasons, the first plan for the installation in the nightclub, *Diagram 1*, attempts to avoid the singular perspectival structure of the (male) gaze by dividing-up the potential sites for looking between the on-screen site and the enclosed room, (e.g.: between an audience, participants, the camera and the on-screen image). I think that proposing to divide the installation into two sites might disrupt an audience's and participants' usual reception of the representation of the feminine, and therefore potentially unsettle their gaze. A feminine form of perception might then arise in participants' and audience's potentially fragmented reception of the installation.

In this way my thesis proposes to explore an alternative to phallogocentric imaging of male desire by way of disrupting images that represent the feminine on her terms. My diagrams explore ways in which to disrupt the look of the participants and the audience and ways in which to

⁶¹ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 79.

fragment representations of the woman's body, so as to de-centre the (male) gaze in its regard of her image; aiming to explore how an image of the feminine might be encountered through an embodied process of perception. With the aim to de-centre phallogulocentric structures the diagrams explore different ways in which to compose the installation in the nightclub as a possible representation of woman's interiority, so that participants/audience might encounter an image of the feminine from a gyneacentric perspective.

Narcissism

In this section I analyse *Diagram 1*'s proposed composition for the installation in the nightclub through theories on narcissism and the (male) gaze to examine how participants and an audience might interact with a representation of woman beyond a phalloculocentric framework. I open out the debate on how narcissism composes the body and the subject differently in terms of *sexuate difference*.⁶² I consider the specificities that constitute male/masculine and female/feminine as sexually different subjectivities; in terms of their respective (male) visibilities and (female) invisibilities through a psychoanalytic framework. I unpack Freud's theory on narcissism. I also briefly introduce the (male) gaze as theorised by Lacan. In an attempt to compose (the plan for) the installation from the position of woman, I take into account her situation as a *non-subject*, as defined by Irigaray. Finally, this section lays the ground work towards the concept of the *feminine negative*, which Irigaray defines as:

Rigorously speaking, she cannot be identified either as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition. Further, she has no "proper" name. And her sexual organ, which is not *one* organ, is counted as *none*. The negative, the underside, the reverse of the only visible and morphologically designatable organ (even if the passage from erection to detumescence does pose some problems): the penis.⁶³

I also discuss how I am applying the notion of woman's ineffability (feminine negative) to the interpretation and structuration of *Diagram 1*.

I imagine that the plan for the installation (in the nightclub set-out in *Diagram 1*) could incite a narcissistic response from participants; that through their investigation of the props participants might encounter representations of

⁶² 'One difference at once appears as universal: sexual, or better sexuate difference. Of course, it is worked out in various ways by different cultures but it maintains constant dimensions with regard to the connection between nature and culture, especially concerning that which already exists and that which is still to be constructed of the relations of one's own body to the self and to the other. [...] Necessities or cultural obligations can appear as universal duties insofar as they are based on a universal given: the division of humanity into two sexes who really live in different worlds. [...] The question is about that world that each one has to build in order to dwell in their own subjectivity and in this way be able to meet with their own subjectivity and in this way be able to meet with the subjectivity of the other and enter into exchange with respect for difference, that is, for what is proper to each one'. Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008), pp. xiii-xiv.

⁶³ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 26.

the female body (props) that could bring into relief the (male's) quest for the (female) *love-object*.⁶⁴ According to Freud, in fetishism the female love-object concerns the fragmentation of the female body by the male (in order to cope with castration anxiety), whereby his desire can only be sexually fulfilled if he regards/fixates on fragments of her body.⁶⁵ The female love-object is constructed as the phallus because the female body represents the threat of castration. In order for the male to cope with castration anxiety he images her body as phallic: therefore her body mirrors his desire to maintain the phallus. The female body is further fetishised and fragmented into parts in order for him to cope with what her body represents (which could be posited as her capacity to castrate the male onlooker⁶⁶). Irigaray critiques the way in which Freud enforces the construction of male desire and the male as the dominant and proper mode of subjectivity:

But, himself a prisoner of a certain economy of the logos, [Freud...] defines sexual difference by giving a priori to Sameness, shoring up his demonstration by falling back upon time-honored devices such as analogy, comparison, symmetry, dichotomous oppositions, and so on. Heir to an "ideology" that he does not call into question, Freud asserts that the "masculine" is the sexual model, that no representation of desire can fail to take it as the standard, can fail to submit to it. Freud makes manifest the presuppositions of the scene of representation: *the sexual indifference* that subtends it assures its coherence and its closure.⁶⁷

In Freud's theorising, male desire is structured through looking. Woman, meanwhile, is maintained from a male perspective as an image of the (narcissistic) desire he has for himself and as the maintenance of the phallus. Freud determined in his study of perversions that all perversions stem from narcissism:

[Narcissism denotes] the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated—who looks at it, that

⁶⁴ In a phalloculocentric framework between the image of woman, seeing the threat of castration, and the imaging of her body as a phallus.

⁶⁵ This will be further elaborated in the following section, Fetishism.

⁶⁶ 'The look, pleasurable in form, can be threatening in its content [because of its birth in the castration complex], and it is woman as representation/image that crystallizes this paradox'. Mulvey, L. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Rosen P. (ed.) Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 202.

⁶⁷ Irigaray, L. This Sex Which Is Not One. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 72.

is to say, strokes it and fondles it till he obtains complete satisfaction through these activities.⁶⁸

In my plan for the installation set-out in *Diagram 1* participants might seek the displaced (female) love-object. This seeking may be conducted through their relation to the camera in the room, their investigation of the props, their imagined image on-screen outside the room, and, in-turn, the reception of their image by an audience. I think that the plan for the installation (in the nightclub), *Diagram 1*, might also be interpreted as a process of displacement between the activity in the enclosed room and its representation outside the room on-screen. The screen outside the room could be seen as a spatially deferred mirror that reflects the participants' activities inside the room. I want to construct a narcissistic scene in which participants would inadvertently be seeking 'themselves as a love-object, [...] exhibiting a type of object-choice which must be termed 'narcissistic'.⁶⁹ However I realise that in the plan set-out in *Diagram 1* the relation between the props (representing female body parts) and the screen could enforce (male) narcissism. According to Freud, only men are subject to this form of narcissism; they go through a process of displacing the love-object onto objects or themselves rather than another subject. Therefore in this plan for the installation participants could potentially displace the love-object onto either:

- objects – the props representing female body parts,
- or participants themselves – through the imagined image of themselves displayed outside the room on screen.

Perhaps participant responses could be interpreted through a different and more appropriate aspect of narcissism because, so far, this interpretation of *Diagram 1* is potentially predicated on voyeurism; as participants' activities inside the enclosed room could potentially be observed by an audience

⁶⁸ Freud, S. On Narcissism: An Introduction. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *Freud's On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991), p. 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 18.

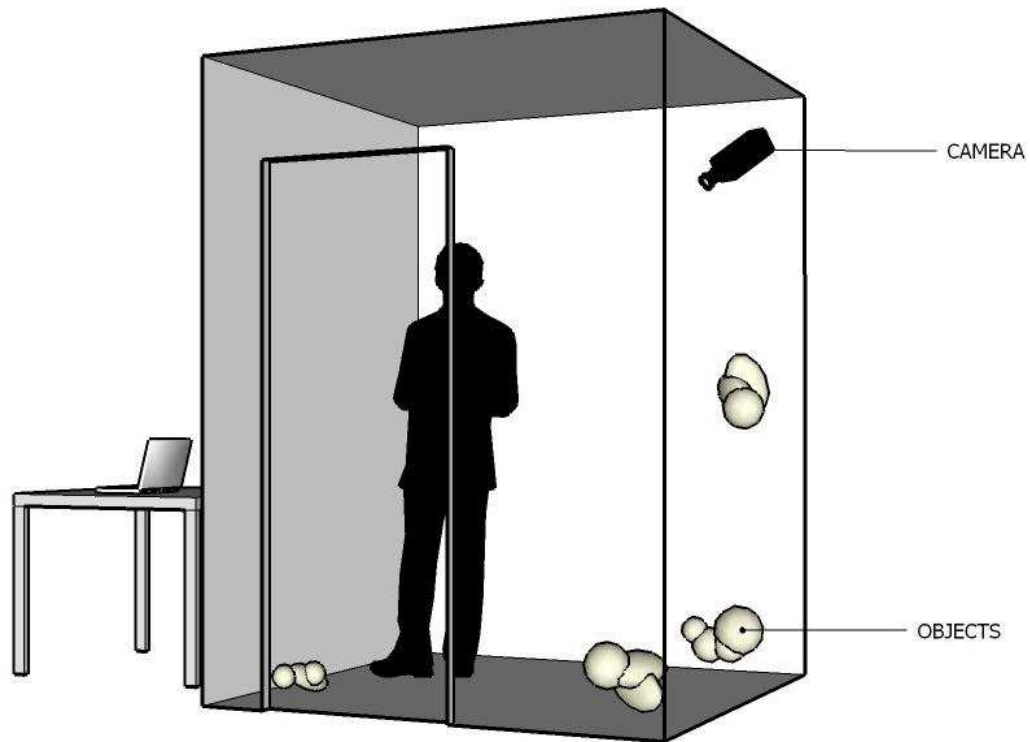


Fig. ii. *Diagram 1: detail*

outside the room that would not be visible to them. Through a voyeuristic framework the audience's viewing position could disempower the participants as they would not be able to return the audience's gaze. Focussing on the participants' potentially exhibitionistic role, though, could empower their role in the installation. Participants might imagine their unfolding image on the screen outside the room, and may consequently *perform* for the camera. This set-up could empower them because the process of exhibiting to the camera could be enacted in order to *invite* passers-by to watch them perform on-screen.⁷⁰ Prior to entering the room participants would be aware of the video camera, which

⁷⁰ I think that, in some ways, Barthes describes the process of having a photograph taken as one in which the person having their photograph taken can, in the initial moments of posing for the photograph, have an empowered exhibitionistic position by way of performing for the camera. 'I decide to let drift over my lips and in my eyes a faint smile which I mean to be "indefinable," in which I might suggest, along with the qualities of my nature, my amused consciousness of the whole photographic ritual: I lend myself to the social game, I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing'. Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida*. London: Vintage, (2000), p. 11.

could provoke them into posing for the camera. They might imagine themselves as an on-screen image in anticipation of becoming an image for the audience. Barthes explains that when a photograph of a person is taken, the person posing for the photograph poses precisely because they imagine how they are being imaged by the photographer. When the photographer observes them through the camera, they compose themselves into an image in anticipation of the image being taken; meaning that the person posing performs for the photographer/camera. The person being photographed can potentially subvert the (photographer's) voyeur's gaze because their exhibitionism acknowledges that they are being looked at/observed by the photographer, camera, and photograph's future audience. Through the premeditative act of posing – and composing themselves into an image – the person having their photograph taken can take charge of the way in which they are composed and viewed.

However, conceptually framing the design of *Diagram 1* in terms of exhibitionism could maintain the structure of the feminine negative through the (male) gaze. According to Sartre, the exhibitionist is *imagined* by the voyeur peering through the keyhole, the exhibitionist is the imagined woman who regards herself in the mirror whilst imagining that she is being watched. Therefore the exhibitionist is contingent on *his* imaginary projections as his negative figuration. Structuring her as a non-subject the feminine negative does not exist beyond being an imagined image in a mirror composed of his desire, which prevents the possibility of her desires from emerging in his system of representation.

I am critiquing the construction of the feminine negative as a passive image of male desire from this perspective in the thesis, so when I refer to the voyeur and the exhibitionist, these terms are situated through the analogy I have drawn here between Barthes', Sartre's and Lacan's theories. I think that Barthes' proposition, in which a person performs and composes their image in anticipation of their photograph being taken can be aligned with (Sartre's and) Lacan's notion of exhibitionism, in which the exhibitionist similarly poses in-front of a mirror in anticipation of becoming an image for the voyeur looking through

the keyhole. I think that this alignment describes the process of the feminine's negative subjectivity under the capture of the one that looks, the (male) gaze. Whether it is a process of performing the image in front of a mirror or for the photographer, I think that the very act of posing as an image is a distinctly (passive) feminine process, because it is predicated on the possibility of becoming an image in the anticipation of the voyeur's (male) desire (which can also be aligned with the process of imaging in the *feminine masquerade*⁷¹). Therefore, should the installation in the nightclub be devised in accordance with *Diagram 1*'s design I think that participants might perform for an imaginary audience, similar to the way in which woman performs as an imaginary mirror of male desire, crucially, posing for a mirror which is not in front of them: the screen outside the enclosed room could be interpreted as being positioned precisely to seduce an audience, to compel their desire to look (through the keyhole). I think that this set-up could maintain the audience's relation to the participants through the (male) gaze and therefore potentially structure the participants as subjugated feminine images. Initially I imagined that *Diagram 1*'s plan could provide a platform for participants to engage in the act of displaying themselves in a narcissistic pursuit of their self-imaging and imaginings on-screen. However, this process would situate participants as exhibitionists par excellence, and, respectively, position passers-by watching the screen as voyeurs. Interpreting *Diagram 1* through the logic of (feminine) exhibitionism and (male) voyeurism seems to simply illustrate, and consequently reinforce, the structure of the (male) gaze.⁷² Structuring *Diagram 1* through this logic therefore risks situating it as a systemically narcissistic project. Before I further develop the inherent problems with such a proposition I establish sexual difference in relation to narcissism, in order to identify the feminine negative's relation to the image in phallogocentrism and to consider her negative's potential for making meaning.

⁷¹ I will elaborate on the concept of the feminine masquerade further on in this section.

⁷² Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 84. See also: Sartre, J-P. IV. The Look, Being-for-others, Part III. In: *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. London: Routledge, (2003), pp. 276-326.

According to Freud, narcissism develops differently in male/masculine and female/feminine subjectivity (in terms of pursuit of the self as love-object). In Freud's hierarchical theorisation of narcissism man may seek himself as love-object (or through attachment to the mother which is the *anacletic* love-object). Freud proposes, however, that the female's sexual organs are subject to latency, meaning that females develop much later in puberty than males. This delay in development 'brings about an intensification of the original narcissism'⁷³ in females. Freud continues, 'women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed upon them in their choice of object'.⁷⁴ In short, in my interpretation of Freud's theory on narcissism, the female subject is composed as a narcissistic object for the male, rather than as a subject independent of the male. In pursuit of her own image as love-object, the female's narcissism is constructed in the register of the visible through the male's narcissistic desire for the female body's exterior visual appearance. She is composed in *original narcissism* as a vehicle for his narcissism, she circuitously affirms his subjectivity by reflecting his desire back to him, therefore she negatively completes his subjectivity.

As Freud points out (and Irigaray critiques), if woman has achieved the status of 'normal woman'⁷⁵ and she has 'good looks',⁷⁶ then she participates in the *masquerade* of the feminine. Masquerading as his version of desire, the

⁷³ Freud, S. On Narcissism: An Introduction. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *Freud's On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991), p. 18.

⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 18-19.

⁷⁵ Irigaray critiques Freud's concept of the 'normal woman' as a construct that situates women as inadequate men in a phallogocentric structure: 'So we must admit that THE LITTLE GIRL IS THEREFORE A LITTLE MAN. A little man who will suffer a more painful and complicated evolution than the little boy in order to become a normal woman! A little man with a smaller penis. A disadvantaged little man. A little man whose libido will suffer a greater repression, and yet whose faculty for sublimating instincts will remain weaker. Whose needs are less catered to by nature and who will yet have a lesser share of culture. A more narcissistic little man because of the mediocrity of her genital organs (?). More modest because ashamed of that unfavorable comparison. More envious and jealous because less well endowed. Unattracted to the social interests shared by men. A little man who would have no other desire than to be, or remain, a man'. Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 26.

⁷⁶ Freud, S. On Narcissism: An Introduction. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *Freud's On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991), p. 18.

feminine is figured as an ornament and as ornamented,⁷⁷ meaning that she performs his system of representation.

Through Irigaray's theorising I argue for the feminine masquerade differently to Freud, as a process in which the feminine subjectivity might emerge between interiority and exteriority.⁷⁸ In my interpretation of the feminine masquerade I propose that whilst the feminine participates in the game of appearances and disappearances (by miming his desire) in the visible, she subverts this phallogocentric construction by absenting herself, through subsuming herself deeper into her invisible, silent and unrepresentable interiority.⁷⁹ In my interpretation of Irigaray's theorising on the feminine masquerade the feminine can affect the visible/language as a necessary and productive process of absence. The feminine can shape the negative spaces between words and things (Irigaray gives the example here of the space between trees in a dream/story book). Whereby the feminine might compose meaning productively through her negative processes in performing the masquerade and her silence in hysteria.

Pictographs in which the hunter and hunted, and their dramatic relationships, are to be discovered *between* the branches, *made out* from *between* the trees. Spaces that organise the scene, blanks that sub-tend the scene's structuration and that will yet to be read as such. Or not read at all? Not seen at all? Never in truth represented or representable, though this is not to say that they have no effect upon the present scenography. But fixed in oblivion and waiting to come to life. [...] Dreams [...] recast the roles that history has laid down for "subject" and "object".⁸⁰

⁷⁷ De Beauvoir, S. Part V Situation – Social Life. In: *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage, (1997), pp. 542-568.

⁷⁸ See Irigaray's dialectic of interiority and exteriority (in the feminine masquerade and the hysteric) development of a potential feminine subjectivity proposed in Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985).

'And if woman is asked to sustain, to revive, man's desire, the request neglects to spell out what it implies as to the value of her own desire. A desire of which she is not aware, moreover, at least not explicitly. But one whose force and continuity are capable of nurturing repeatedly and at length all the masquerades of "femininity" that are expected of her'. Ibid. p. 27.

⁷⁹ Irigaray suggests that the feminine masquerade comprises feminine subjectivity as a multiplicitous process. However my proposition for multiplicity is initially developed here through the feminine as an absent subjectivity as a potentially active subjective process and is expanded further on in the thesis.

⁸⁰ Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 138. My interpretation of the feminine masquerade will be developed further in relation to (f)low visibility's composition in the section Diagram 1: The Feminine Masquerade.

My interpretation of the feminine negative, as a process of interiority and exteriority, refers to Irigaray's composition of the masquerade and the hysteric.⁸¹ To unpack my interpretation of her definition further I return to Freud's account of the masquerade. According to Freud, the female's pursuit of a love-object is delayed by the late maturation of her sex, meaning that she can only model herself on his narcissism. As a result she emerges as a mirror to his developed narcissism and is determined by her biology (female), which effects the formation of her subjectivity, her gender (feminine). In effect, Freud's figuration of narcissism structures feminine subjectivity as the masquerade of the feminine in the negative, as a non-subject, in Irigaray's words:

What do I mean by masquerade? In particular, what Freud calls "femininity." The belief, for example that it is necessary to *become* a woman, a "normal" one at that, whereas a man is a man from the outset. He has only to effect his being-a-man, whereas a woman has to become a normal woman, that is has to enter into the masquerade of femininity. In the last analysis, the female Oedipus complex is woman's entry into a system of values that is not hers, and in which she can "appear" and circulate only when enveloped in the needs/desires/fantasies of others, namely, men.⁸²

But there is a way that woman can overcome being the mirror to his narcissism. As Freud suggests:

Even for narcissistic women, whose attitude towards men remains cool, there is a road which leads to complete object-love. In the child which they bear, a part of their own body confronts them like an extraneous object, to which, starting out from their narcissism, they can then give complete object-love.⁸³

In Freud's theorising women suffer from *penis envy*. According to Freud, bearing a child, especially if it is a boy, means that the child can be a substitute for the penis. She can therefore take possession of the penis by having a child. In this way, woman is locked in as the site of phallic (signification of) desire; whilst she does not have a phallus, she is imaged as a phallus under the male gaze, she also seeks out the phallus through the father/husband/child. The relation between woman and man/child is predicated on the absence of the

⁸¹ (The hysteric is composed as outwardly miming his desire whilst being incapable of articulating her interiority.)

⁸² Irigaray, L. *This Sex which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 134.

⁸³ Freud, S. On Narcissism: An Introduction. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *Freud's On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991), pp. 19-20.

phallus and the desire for the phallus,⁸⁴ and therefore denies her access to her own desire and subjectivity (in a phalloculocentric framework). In Irigaray's words:

Her lot is that of "lack," "atrophy" (of the sexual organ), and "penis envy," the penis being the only sexual organ of recognized value. Thus she attempts by every means available to appropriate that organ for herself: through her somewhat servile love of the father-husband capable of giving her one, through her desire for a child-penis, preferably a boy, through access to the cultural values still reserved by right to males alone and therefore always masculine, and so on. Woman lives her own desire only as the expectation that she may at last come to possess an equivalent of the male organ.⁸⁵

Woman's potential to become a subject in a phallic economy is always constructed through deference to the one (the male/masculine), either through becoming his narcissistic image and therefore completing male subjectivity, or through fetishism by having a child. In Freud's work, the female/feminine can only take-up two positions: as a (feminine) sex object in relation to men, or as a (female) mother in relation to the child. These two positions determine her as a negative subject.

The central intention of my thesis is to resituate the feminine negative in Freud's and Lacan's theorising of woman as a passive image of male desire. I aim to counter the antiquated position of female/feminine as captured and possessed by the (male) gaze by critiquing Lacan's theory of the gaze through making artworks which make an alternative proposition. Furthermore, I counter the female/feminine figured as an image of the male/masculine subject's narcissistic desire and/or as affirmed through child bearing in Freud's theory on narcissism. The diagrams (and other artworks in the thesis) attempt to work towards suggesting compositional relations in a feminine register, so that the production of images and reception of the images are not ordered through the (male) gaze—phalloculocentric logic.

⁸⁴ 'The paradox of phalloculocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as a linchpin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies'. Mulvey, L. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Rosen P. (ed.) Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 196.

⁸⁵ Irigaray, L. This Sex which is Not One. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp. 23-24.

The impetus of this thesis is to readdress the position of the female/feminine subject's figuration as negative, as non-subject; either constructed as an external surface mirroring masculine narcissistic desire (the feminine), or as deference to the child as an extraneous fetishised love-object (the mother/female). However, as the thesis develops I suggest that the feminine negative's structuration through absences and losses might in fact be a productive and active process of negation. Before I develop this proposition further, though, I think that it is important to elaborate on Irigaray's theory of (malecentric) *sameness*.⁸⁶ Irigaray critiques patriarchy's hierarchical binary structuration of sexual sameness in the register of the visible as a construction that makes feminine subjectivity impossible:

- The *same* is male/man/masculine = one, the original subject.
- The female/woman/feminine cannot *become* subject because she is (not man) not *one*,⁸⁷ but *zero*, constructed in a binary relation to the male/man/masculine subject who is always one.

Relying on the discourse of the feminine negative (through Irigaray's theorising), I question the patriarchal structure of the visible and the (male) gaze in the diagrams and in my installation at the nightclub. Specific attention is given to performance, participant interaction and the technological apparatus, which aims to explore the potential for an audience to encounter an artwork in a feminised register. Because of my desire to productively invest the feminine as a negative subjectivity, I challenge the conventional positions of the negative in terms of the feminine as appearance in the visible and the female as mother. This challenge is explored through the composition of the diagrams that develop

⁸⁶ “‘Sexual difference’ is a derivation of the problematic of sameness, it is, now and forever, determined within the project, the projection, the sphere of representation, of the same. The “differentiation” into two sexes derives from the a priori assumption of the same, since the little man that the little girl is, must become a man minus certain attributes whose paradigm is morphological—attributes capable of determining, of assuring, the reproduction-specularization of the same. A man minus the possibility of (re)presenting oneself as a man = a normal woman. In this proliferating desire of the same, death will be the only representative of an outside, a heterogeneity, of an other: woman will assume the function of representing death (sex/organ), castration’. Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp. 26-27.

⁸⁷ ‘Because “I” am not “I,” I am not, I am not one’. Irigaray, L. *This Sex which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 120.

the plans for the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub, by experimenting with different possible configurations of the props (that represent the (human) female body), relations between the installation's contents, and looks that could arise in its reception.

Returning to the problem of *Diagram 1*, as previously mentioned, *Diagram 1* risks illustrating narcissism. I had initially proposed that *Diagram 1* could devise a potential site for participants' narcissistic encounter with their (male) self in the isolated room. However, in light of my discussion of the masquerade and my desire to situate *Diagram 1* in the register of the feminine, I will return to my analysis of the participants' potential to become exhibitionists. I think that the position of the camera in *Diagram 1* could defer the relation between the participants and an audience, considering my interpretation of the feminine masquerade's process of exterior appearance and simultaneous cultivation of her interiority. I think that the process of the feminine masquerade could be interpreted as being spatially analogous to the (activity) inside the enclosed room and the on-screen images outside the room. I proposed that participants' exhibitionism might arise because the screen outside the enclosed room would display their image. The screen could be interpreted as a kind of mirror of participants, like a process of feminine appearance. I suggested that participants might seek their image on-screen through a process of masculine narcissism, which I said would still maintain them in the role of exhibitionists because they would be seeking to image themselves through the command of male desire. However, participants may regard the screen differently to my previous proposition. Rather than participating in the installation by performing and/or posing through imagining what the audience wants to see, I think that participants might appear as images on-screen simply in terms of being images to be looked at (in terms of their *to-be-looked-at-ness*) by an audience. Laura Mulvey proposes in her analysis that viewers' visual pleasure of film in the cinema is dependent on the female character's *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Mulvey discusses how (mainstream) film and its reception are structured to cohere through the (male) gaze, by gazing at a female character in the film the viewer's

look is aligned with the look of the (phantom) camera and the male character in (narrative) film:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.⁸⁸

Irrespective of whether or not participants attempt to subvert the capture of their image by performing for the audience, the structure of *Diagram 1* risks structuring the audience's reception of the participants' image as a reflection which endlessly exteriorises their *to-be-looked-at-ness* (like feminine appearances). Due to *Diagram 1*'s proposed one-sided-watching, the on-screen image would be displayed/maintained in terms of the participants' *to-be-looked-at-ness* regardless of their interactions and their own agency. The participants' image would be held by the audience's look. This seems to fortify the hierarchy of the sensible as privileging the visible in *Diagram 1*.

Diagram 1 seems to position the screen as a *virtual keyhole* into the room. The installation thus runs the risk of being a masculine scopophilic enterprise because, in this configuration, it could assign the power to the voyeur/viewer peering through the screen at the participant, without the participant being able to return or mediate their look. However, passers-by may potentially not be watching the screen alone. Furthermore, there could be others passing-by the installation. The passers-by's gaze could be apprehended, not by the return of the gaze of the participant in the room, but through someone watching them watch the screen outside the room.⁸⁹ In this way, the gaze of the one that watches the screen could be realised, because they would be observed by an

⁸⁸ Mulvey, L. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Rosen P. (ed.) Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 203.

⁸⁹ 'When he has presented himself in the action of looking through a keyhole. A gaze surprises him in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him to a feeling of shame. The gaze in question is certainly the presence of others as such. But does this mean it is a relation of subject to subject, in the function of the existence of others as looking at me, that we apprehend what the gaze really is?' Lacan, J. Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 84. See also: Lacan, J. The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I. In: Kul-Want, C. (ed.) Philosophers on Art from Kant to the Postmodernists. New York: Columbia University Press, (2010), p. 158-159.

other, in Sartre's terms, as a *seen gaze*, 'a gaze imagined by me in the field of the other'⁹⁰— in this way the gaze of one could only be apprehended through the other's *facticity*.⁹¹ This relation, whereby the gaze is realised in the imaginary field of the other who observes the other watching through the virtual keyhole, could be interpreted through the position of the screen, set-out in *Diagram 1*, as the site that orientates and organises these looks and therefore risks instituting and describing the actions of the voyeur par excellence in Sartre's model of the gaze as described by Lacan.

This is a troubling issue as my project is concerned with the processes of visibility of the feminine. Though it is concerned with what is not visible, I am not attempting to figure an uneven power relation between what is visible or not visible in the installation. Through my plans for installation in the nightclub, set out in the diagrams, I question how perception can emerge differently, in terms of the visible, without using the (male) gaze as a necessary vehicle for visibility. So that the representation (image) of the feminine in *(f)low visibility's* installation in the nightclub might be experienced and understood by the audience and the participants as an active and productive process of the feminine negative. I propose to dynamise her negative phalloculocentric representation, as a productive process of absences and losses by exploring different image making processes and possibilities for their reception (by participants and audiences) through the diagrams. The diagrams aim to explore a way to subvert the (male) gaze's fixation on her image and to compose a potential for a different (feminised) experience of representations of the feminine for the installation of *(f)low visibility* at the nightclub. In order to explicate fully the problem of phalloculocentrism as it is implicated here, though, in the following section I introduce fetishism as it fleshes out the issue of male desire and narcissism.

⁹⁰ Sartre, J-P. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. London: Routledge, (2003), p. 283.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Fetishism

This section aligns fetishism and narcissism; it also expands on my initial speculation on, and analysis of, *Diagram 1. Castration anxiety* is explored through the construction of the woman's body as objects that are seen in the visible. The feminine masquerade is pitched against this construction so as to offer a possible escape from the exteriorising gaze in the visible, towards a more interiorised feminine form of perception. I develop this proposition further through the situation of the phallus and the mirror, in terms of the structuration of woman's subjectivity; concerning how the phallus seems to order woman in deference to a superior other as a sex-object or as a mother of a child. The feminist critique of phallogocentrism stresses that in psychoanalytic theory woman can only be encountered negatively in the visible, as a substitute for the phallus or as lacking the phallus. Setting out from this critical position, throughout the course of the thesis, I attempt to invest the feminine negative as an active process. This section then participates in carving out the theoretical underpinnings of my thesis, which concerns how to structure the installation, *Diagram 1*, through a feminised sensibility.

The word *fetish* derives from the Portuguese word '*Feitico*, meaning fated, charmed, bewitched, later coming to mean the word for witchcraft; which originated from the Latin *Facticium*, meaning artificial'.⁹² Historically three main types of fetishism have been theorised: religious or spiritual fetishism, commodity fetishism, and psychiatric or pathological fetishism. Psychiatric or pathological fetishism, as defined by Freud, is the substitution of the body with an inanimate object as one of desire.⁹³ These different forms of fetishism are often collapsed and misused. For example, the fetish nightclub in which I set-up my proposed installation, to some extent, makes use of all three types of fetishism despite being framed as a place which principally endorses the latter

⁹² Gamman, L. & Makinen, M. *Female Fetishism - A New Look*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, (1994), p. 14.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 16 – 46.

of the three, psychiatric or pathological fetishism. I will refer to this as *sexual fetishism* in accordance with Lorraine Gammon and Merja Makinen's use of the term in their book *Female Fetishism-A New Look*.⁹⁴ This is derived from Alfred Binet's conception of the term. Sexual fetishism is the worship of an object. Binet does not define sexual fetishism as a disease or mental disorder but as a process of *desire*.⁹⁵ This distinction is important, as the dynamics of narcissism mean that the feminine is always subject to fragmentation in fetishism, whereby her body is reduced to being an inanimate object, it is broken-up and fetishised, through narcissism, either as an image of his desire or through having a child.

Perhaps Freud's conception of woman as a series of fetishised objects and as a *biologically determined* body (which limits woman to becoming "normal" and to being a vehicle of reproduction) might be subverted in the installation if I include deformed, rather than fragmented, representations of woman's body.⁹⁶

Her body is already systemically fragmented because she represents the lack of the penis and is fetishised through his narcissistic desire as a set of displaced body parts constructed as objects and onto objects. Deformed representations of her body might therefore relocate her representation beyond a phalloculocentric construction in audience and participant reception of the installation.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 16-46.

⁹⁶ Perhaps Diagram 1's proposition for participant interaction with props that represent deformed female body could be a way of further problematising the feminine negative and the representation of her interiority, rather than fragmenting the representations of her body, I intend to make abnormal versions of her interior body to subvert the course of fetishism. Women are traditionally perceived as the bearers of abominations, of monstrosities from the womb. Braidotti explains: 'The association of femininity with monstrosity points to a system of pejoration that is implicit in the binary logic of oppositions that characterizes the phalloculocentric discursive order. The monstrous as the negative pole, the pole of perjection, is structurally analogous to the feminine as that which is other-than the established norm, whatever that norm might be. [...] Within this dualistic system, monsters are, just like bodily female subjects, a figure of devalued difference. [...] The theme of woman as devalued difference remained a constant in Western thought; in philosophy especially, "she" is forever associated to unholy, disorderly, subhuman, and unsightly phenomena. [...] It is important to stress the light that psychoanalytic theory has cast upon this hatred for the feminine and the traditional patriarchal association of women with monstrosity'. Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1994), p. 80. See also: Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993). I will expand further on the relation between the monster and the feminine in the section: The Monstrous Props.

Freud's conception of fetishism is problematic; as it is not inclusive, it excludes the possibility of woman as fetishist. By definition, desire can only be enacted by man in pathological or psychiatric fetishism. Briefly, this perversion is caused by his castration anxiety. In the pre-oedipal phase the boy realises that his mother does not possess a penis and imagines that she has been castrated by the father. The boy then wants to get rid of the father because he disrupts his union with his mother. The boy consequently fears that his father will take revenge on him for his murderous wishes, so he rejects the lacking mother and turns towards his father, therefore taking up a heterosexual position. Believing that everyone possesses a penis as he cannot guess that there is another form of genitalia of equal value and importance (i.e.: the vagina), he imagines that girls have a small penis that will grow later, or that the 'little girls too had a penis, but it was cut-off and in its place was left a wound'.⁹⁷ As a result, he becomes fixated on the *object*, the *phallus*, therein begins his object transferral. He fears the loss of his member, as he is constantly reminded by her lacking body (absence of a penis), causing him to project a phallus onto her in order to cope with her *lack* and his castration anxiety. 'The subject oscillates between the opposing views that women have a penis (and hence his is safe) and that they do not (and hence need the penis substitute – the fetish)'.⁹⁸ Castration anxiety is bound-up in the process of the (male) gaze, as the little boy sees the absence of the phallus as woman's body, structuring her in phallogocentrism, whereby the fetish becomes a process of substitution to overcome the threat of castration.⁹⁹

In Freud's terms, after the girl realises that her genitals are inferior to his (according to Freud all women suffer from the same condition), she is separated from the mother and other women and can only envy him (penis envy). Thus,

⁹⁷ Freud, S. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In: Kul-Want, C. (ed.) *Philosophers on Art from Kant to the Postmodernists*. New York: Columbia University Press, (2010), p. 88.

⁹⁸ Gamman, L. & Makinen, M. *Female Fetishism - A New Look*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, (1994), p. 42.

⁹⁹ "The gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety". Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 72-73.

'she becomes aware of her wound to her narcissism...develops, like a scar, a sense of inferiority'.¹⁰⁰ Hence, the girl begins to work from melancholia. Irigaray defines this notion as the girl functioning from the position of loss, in which she undergoes a loss of relation to other women and a loss of her relation to her body, meaning that she loses the capacity to manifest her own sexual desire. The girl goes through this process of loss and entry into desire without being aware of her losses.

She has no consciousness of her sexual impulses, of her libidinal economy and, more particularly, of her original desire and her desire for origin. In more ways than one, it is really a question for her of a "loss" that radically escapes any representation.¹⁰¹

Moreover, through the loss of her mother and of her desire, the little girl is constructed from the position of *object-loss*. The little girl is constituted through her lack of self-esteem, because she is not aware of these losses she cannot enter into what Lacan calls the *symbolic*: language (logos) which she is incapable of representing due to these losses in her ebbing subjectivity.

The little girl's melancholia acts like a wound which empties out all object-cathexis from the ego; acting from her loss, she can only manifest as his mirror and mime his desire in his system of representation. To further develop the relation between narcissism and fetishism I will briefly return to my interpretation of Irigaray's theory of the feminine masquerade. The masquerade constitutes a divided feminine subjectivity; whilst miming his desire the feminine cultivates a reserve for herself elsewhere. The reserve which the feminine cultivates within herself is an ineffable sanctuary for feminine subjectivity and constitutes woman's greater affinity with her interiority.¹⁰² As a result, there is a perpetual

¹⁰⁰ Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 68.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Irigaray describes how women have an affinity with their interior subjectivity and men have an affinity with exteriorising their subjectivity: 'The mother, and later the woman, remain confused with a world that is solely natural, from which it is necessary to emerge in order to become a man; they are not recognized with a full humanity that transcends itself in a way different from that of a man. The mother, a woman, exist starting from an en-stasis and not from an ec-stasis with regard to themselves. Their world is constituted through respecting the other within oneself, and not by projecting the totality of what exists outside oneself, as man does. The expression of transcendence requires different modalities on the part of man and woman. For woman, what matters is to withdraw'. Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. New York: Continuum, (2008), p. xiii-xiv.

process of loss in terms of the feminine subject. She is always in the double act of escaping to her interiority whilst miming his desire through her body's exterior appearance in the visible. Therefore, the masquerade composes her as a negative subject. She cannot be represented, not even in the double activity of the masquerade, so she merely mimes a desire which is not her own whilst escaping further into her unrepresentable and unspeakable interiorised subjectivity.

By withdrawing the libido from the external world, the libido is 'directed to the Ego giving rise to an attitude which may be called Narcissism'.¹⁰³ This process of narcissism is particular to the construction of femininity in terms of the woman operating from his construction of desire. The feminine then appears as a reflective surface composed of images. She images his desire because of her impoverished narcissism. In Phelan's words 'she is his mirror, and thus is never in it'.¹⁰⁴ The feminine mimes his desire, she is the exhibitionist (according to Sartre), imagining his gaze she regards herself in the mirror imagining how she will be viewed by him. The conditions of phalloculocentrism prevent the feminine from entering into her own desire/subjectivity, structured as the lack par excellence; the potential for her own subjectivity's emergence is suspended because she is prone to perpetual losses.¹⁰⁵

Therefore the feminine can (according to this phalloculocentric framework) only function from the position of narcissism, albeit an impoverished narcissism. The narcissistic subject's withdrawal from people and things, and inability to replace them in fantasy, results in inversion. As these objects are replaced in fantasy, the male narcissistic subject will lead the libido back to objects, meaning that he will recover. However, the little girl is impoverished in her dependency on narcissism, meaning that she cannot imagine nor have a love-object for herself. She gives up her relation to reality and cannot distinguish

¹⁰³ Freud, S. In: Sandler, J. Spector Person, E. & Fonagy, P. (eds.) *On Narcissism: An Introduction*. London: Yale University Press, (1991), p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006), p. 101.

¹⁰⁵ 'The gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as the thrust of our experience, namely, the lack that constitutes castration anxiety.' Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 72-73.

between the real and the imaginary, mixing up her imaginary substitution for objects with the real. She can only appear as narcissistic feminine, operating purely from her surface qualities, from her narcissism, which is constructed in order to enforce his narcissism.¹⁰⁶ The feminine is simply a construction of his desire oscillating between either being a phallus or being a representation of his anxiety of not having a phallus. 'To put it plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (mother's) phallus which the little boy once believed in and does not wish to forego'.¹⁰⁷ Her sex is unrepresentable, it is the *dark continent*, the place of horror which cannot be looked at.¹⁰⁸ 'Aversion of the real female genitals, which is never lacking in any fetishist, also remains as an indelible stigma of the repression that has taken place [in castration anxiety]'.¹⁰⁹

My central concern in conceptually designing the installation (*Diagram 1*) is with developing a sexually different approach to the representation of the feminine in the experience of an artwork, so as to move beyond her representation as the *same*. In the phallogocentric masculine project of narcissism, man is constructed through the symbolic and the feminine is unrepresentable in her own terms, meaning that the feminine has no access to the symbolic, that is, his system of representation.

As she mimes his desire she is not represented as subject, she remains pre-symbolic (in terms of her invisible female sex). I want to subvert the construction of the feminine in the phallogocentric framework of the gaze by altering her usual representation and reception through the installation at the nightclub. In order to subvert this construction (in theory) I work from the premise that the feminine negative might be a productive process through which to represent her as an absent and unutterable subjectivity in an ongoing process

¹⁰⁶ Kofman, S. Narcissistic Woman: Freud and Girard. *Diacritics*. Vol. 10, No.3, (Autumn 1980), pp. 36-45.

¹⁰⁷ Freud, S. Fetishism. In: *Sexuality and Psychology of Love*. New York: Collier Books, (1972), p. 215.

¹⁰⁸ 'Her sexual organ represents the horror of nothing to see. A defect in this systematic of representation and desire. A "hole" in the scopophilic lens. [...] Woman's genitals are simply absent, masked, sewn back up inside their "crack". Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p.26.

¹⁰⁹ Freud, S. Fetishism. In: *Sexuality and Psychology of Love*. New York: Collier Books, (1972), p. 216.

of loss. This proposition is taken up so that the composition of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub might perform a hysterical intention. Though traditionally the hysterical position is damning for women, I approach the hysteric as a potentially productive process of the feminine negative. The reason why I am attempting to orientate the plan for the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub as a process of miming the feminine (to perform the hysteric) is because, as theorised by Irigaray, within this context the feminine has the potential to emerge and to make her own meaning by actively acting out the role of femininity. Through exaggerating the performance of femininity through the representation of female body parts in my plan for the installation in the nightclub, I think that the maelstrom of masculine language could be deformed through performing the feminine, the hysteric. In turn, this process of hysterical mimicry proposed for the representation of the feminine in the installation could mean that an active representation of her image might disrupt the participants' and the audience's reception of her image as a fantasy of male desire. The problem persists though: 'it should normally have been given up, but the purpose of a fetish precisely is to preserve it from being lost'.¹¹⁰ I intend to frame my artworks and my research as a hysterical attempt to speak and gesture the feminine negative.

Considering this structure of woman in fetishism, I aim to resituate the conceptual design of the installation in the nightclub (*Diagram 1*) as an enclosed room. The enclosed room is analogous to the inversion of the feminine, as the dark continent. The imaging outside the enclosed room through projections, meanwhile, could be interpreted as a process of narcissism and fetishism. Reflecting on Phelan's interpretation of Irigaray's discussion of *Plato's Cave*, in which she draws an analogy between the apparatus, as the producer of images (shadows), and the theatre set, as the womb/cave, in her discussion of performing arts practices. 'If the shadows in the cave must always be located outside the mother's body so too must theatrical projection occur across rather

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 215.

than within the female body'.¹¹¹ I imagine that the two sites proposed in *Diagram 1* could subvert the construction of the feminine through narcissism by emphasising the representation of feminine interiority, because of its spatial distinction between the site representing feminine interiority (enclosed room for participant interaction with props representing the female body in a deformed way) and the site referencing her interiority (through projections on-screen for audience reception). I think that this interpretation of *Diagram 1* is analogous to my interpretation of the feminine masquerade and the hysteric (explicated in the previous section *Narcissism*) in terms of the feminine's interiorised and exteriorised subjective processes. In my interpretation of the feminine masquerade, whilst she outwardly mimes male desire she escapes deeper into her interiority in order to cultivate it. Furthermore, in my interpretation of the hysteric, the hysteric appears in the visible through her attempts to speak, in which she mimes male language through a process of mute gestures, whilst within she (though outwardly appearing to remain silent) endlessly chatters. Moreover, perhaps through my interpretation, which I propose subverts the conventional interpretation of the masquerade and the hysteric (in Freud's theorising), in the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub the audience might register the on-screen image as a reference to feminine interiority – the womb. Rather than devising the plan for the installation as a potential proviso for the audience to encounter the on-screen image as a representation of the power of their one-sided-gaze, I think that the images' content should actively disturb their gaze. Perhaps if the installation were to attempt to deliberately gesture, rather than directly represent, feminine interiority on-screen the imaging process might actively perform her negative subjective processes.

I imagine that the participants might represent the regard of her body from within. Although an audience could represent the regard of her body from outside their encounter with the image of participants' interiorised perspective on-screen could shift their exteriorised perspective towards a gyneacentric one.

¹¹¹ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006), p.124.

Through this approach perhaps the installation could provide an audience with the potential to experience a feminised process, analogous to my interpretation of the feminine masquerade and the hysteric, that shifts between interiorised and exteriorised perspectives, that is, between on-screen representations and participant interaction. Rather than simply gazing at a representation of her exterior appearance on-screen the audience could potentially encounter the representation of the enclosed room on-screen as a representation of the womb. Perhaps the on-screen image could represent the ineffable dark continent (the female sex) which, because of its pre-symbolic status, might only be encountered by an audience at a distance, because her sex represents the proper site of the (male) gaze's aversion. As a result the on-screen image could disrupt the audience's capacity to look. In this way *Diagram 1* might be understood as a potential design for a *feminised space*. However, the participants in this relation could still be reduced to a set of objects for the proper subjects' gaze, because the participants' image would be represented from the cameras' perspective for an audiences' observation. In the proposed set-up of the installation set-out in *Diagram 1* there seems to be a danger of reproducing a fetishised and/or narcissistic relation in the audience's desire to look/gaze at the (participant as an) image on-screen.

In the next section I explore different ways to relate the apparatus, the participants, the audience and the props to each other in *Diagram 1* in order to attempt to compose the installation as a representation of feminine interiority. I also propose how the (male) gaze might be deconstructed. Although I am proposing that the installation could offer-up a gyneacentric perspective in its reception, this is not an attempt at providing participants and an audience with the possibility of looking/gazing inside the feminine; rather I aim to provide the possibility for an encounter and exchange with her representation through a sexually different perceptual register, through the feminine's interior process of perception: touch; because, in Irigaray's words, 'woman takes pleasure more

from touching than from looking'.¹¹² And this is a question of representing her desire.

¹¹² (Marks' quotes Irigaray's theorisation of touch as a feminine process of perception). Marks, L. U. Touch. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), p. 7.

Vision & the Gaze: Phalloculocentrism

Proposing touch as a feminine process of perception

In the previous sections I discussed the structure of phalloculocentrism in terms of the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of narcissism and fetishism and briefly discussed the (male) gaze in relation to Lacan and Sartre. This section focuses on the phalloculocentric determination of vision, and is addressed with regard to sexually differentiated perception. In this section I formulate an alternative possibility for the feminine than the one offered by Freud's and Lacan's theorising. I propose that a feminised approach can be taken up by anyone. The question at stake here is: how can an audience encounter a (moving) image outside of the (male) gaze's structuration of the vision? To this end, I explore the potential for an embodied approach to perception, starting with the relation between touching and seeing. The dominant theoretical conceptions (previously discussed in the sections: *Narcissism* and *Fetishism*) privilege vision at the cost of the other senses, especially with regard to touching – in such discourses touching is generally regarded as another form of seeing, rather than as a form of perception that can potentially guide or inform other senses. An important formulation of this privileging is found in Lacan's spatial structuration of vision, which subordinates touching to seeing.¹¹³ I discuss this relation starting from Laura Marks' analysis of film and her (dual) notion of the *haptic* as a relation between seeing and touching so as to determine what could, indeed, be an appropriately feminine form of perception in the plan for the installation in the nightclub (in *Diagram 1*).¹¹⁴ In the previous sections I also discussed how vision is structured by male desire which is auto-erotically constructed from the position of narcissism in the (male) gaze. Through the structure of (male) desire, vision is situated at the top of the hierarchy of the human senses.

¹¹³ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Marks, L. U. *The Skin of the Film*. London: Duke University Press, (2000). See also: Marks, L. U. *Touch*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2002).

Hilary Robinson describes the structure of (male) narcissism par excellence through an Irigarayan framework as follows:

The idealised reflecting of the male subject back to himself is a closed circuit within the phallogentric gaze. But then, as we have seen, the phallogentric gaze, phallogentric in its auto-eroticism, occupies the site of sight, ignoring other senses. It sees that the woman is the other of its same; it sees that she has nothing to see; it sees only the symmetrical paradox.¹¹⁵

I question how the (male) gaze is predicated on the negation of sexual difference in the phallogentric system, which figures woman as imaged, captured, and possessed as property.

I approach the problem of phallogentrism in my practice by rerouting the visual (specifically in terms of the sensible body) through touch. I intend to make props that represent female sexual reproductive body parts (in a deformed way) to attract and repel participants not only to look at them, but also, to touch them. I imagine that representing the dark continent could create a tension between looking and not looking which could disrupt participants' usual reception of a representation of the feminine. Perhaps my proposition for the props' composition could devise the installation through a *maternal-feminine*¹¹⁶ thematic. To subvert the construction of woman's body as phallic image and ultimately as a narcissistic and fetishised body I propose that touch might afford a different access to composing the installation in the nightclub from a gynocentric perspective. I imagine that the participants' experience of being caught between attraction and repulsion towards an object (the props) could be similar to the process of the feminine being caught in the double act of the masquerade: between appearing (exterior) and simultaneously escaping inward (interior) – the dialectic of interiority and exteriority pointed out by Irigaray as constitutive of the feminine subject. Touch is proposed as a feminine register of perception because it could be situated as a mode of access between the interior and exterior body that composes feminine corporeality in the negative, as an interval between being touched and being seen. In order to address the

¹¹⁵Robinson, H. The Visible. In: Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women. London: IB Tauris & Co Ltd, (2006), p. 66.

¹¹⁶Irigaray, L. An Ethics of Sexual Difference. London: Continuum, (2004).

context of touch replacing vision, though, I need to situate the construction of perception in relation to vision.

The discourse on vision is canonised as spatially constituted and figured as geometrical. According to Lacan 'the whole trick, the hey presto!, of the classic dialectic around perception, derives from the fact that it deals with geometral vision, that is to say, with vision in so far as it is situated in a space that is not in its essence the visual'.¹¹⁷ I, however, approach perception differently, so that vision is not at the top of the hierarchy of perception. I compose perception through the corporeal (sensible body), so as to move beyond the discourses on vision which are structured through a lexicon of captivation and capture: 'for us, the geometrical dimension enables us to glimpse how the subject who is caught, manipulated, captured, in the field of vision'.¹¹⁸ I think that in Lacan's theorising perception is first spatial and then visual. Perceiving depth structures perspective and hence orders the image for the subject, externalising the order of vision as masculine perception par excellence. (Male) vision is ordered outside the body through space before encountering what can potentially be seen by the subject. I imagine that researching the relationship between the visible and touching in a haptic relation could be, as suggested by Marks, an appropriate 'visual strategy for women and feminists',¹¹⁹ to subvert the subordination of touching to seeing. This could provide a way to deconstruct the phallogulocentric canon of vision, in terms of its exteriorised geometral ordering of space and exteriorised seeing in relation to the figuration of women.

Marks proposes that:

Cinematic perception is not merely (audio) visual but synesthetic, an act in which the senses and the intellect are not conceived as separate. Thus it makes sense to talk of touch participating in what we think of as primarily a visual experience, if we understand this experience to be one of the lived body.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 94.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 92.

¹¹⁹ Marks, L. U. *The Skin of the Film*. London: Duke University Press, (2000), p. 170.

¹²⁰ Marks, L. U. *Touch*. London: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), p.13.

Marks describes the haptic relation through the experience of film as one in which the film object and viewing subject mutually constitute each other through a lived body, as 'a mutually constitutive exchange'.¹²¹ Initially, Marks seems to be describing a democratic viewing exchange with the film image, whereby the viewer experiences the film through dissolving their subjectivity with the film. Furthermore, I interpret her as saying that the viewer conceives the narrative of the film in its gaps and traces. She suggests that this closeness to the film's surface means that the 'viewer gives up her own sense of separateness from the image'¹²² in the viewer's *haptic erotic* relation with the film. She seems to suggest that the viewing experience is collapsed into the image's surface and that the viewer's body comingles with the image. I find this relation troubling as women are ontologically already subject to imaging. Marks' proposition of the haptic erotic seems to merely affirm the maxim of an image-made-woman which in my interpretation continues to construct woman as and intertwine woman with the image. Though in her figuration this occurs through embodiment (albeit in the register of the erotic), she seems to forget that embodiment is not necessarily the privilege of a feminine process of perception. The way in which she has figured embodiment is also problematic because she proposes that the viewer's body is composed with the exterior surface of an image, that is, with a film. Marks seems to reinforce the structure of perception as an orientation of perspectival vision (whereby vision is once again predicated on space), and to determine the haptics of touch and vision in relation to the potential closeness and distance of the viewer's experience of a film. She suggests that the relation between the viewer and the image occurs through a process of exchange in both the spatial configurations of touch and vision.

By proposing to replace vision with touch, Marks' notion of haptics seems to reinforce touching as another way of tracing geometral vision; in my interpretation the coupling of vision and touch seems to refigure the spatial structure of the (male) gaze. Although a haptic erotic process, in which the body

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

of the viewer comingles with the film's surface, appears to suggest that the woman can reach a different exchange in the visible through touch, and though I do not take issue with whether or not this is achieved, this figuration does however, seem to problematically privilege vision over the other senses. The haptic erotic appears to be problematic because perception (seeing and touching) seems to be ordered outside the body through perspective. I think that organising the depth of the image spatially, in terms of pairing touch and vision, is not a productive 'feminist strategy', as proposed by Marks, as it does not seem to move beyond Lacan's conception of the gaze as a mode of organising perception in space. Lacan states that this organisation can be achieved through looking or touching. Furthermore, Lacan explains that a blind man could conceive of gazing at an image through explaining how a *lucinda* functions to make a 'correct perspective image',¹²³ confirming that for Lacan touching is a form of spatially ordered vision. 'We would get him, for example to finger an object of a certain height, then follow the stretched thread'¹²⁴ to the object.

The possibility for a form of feminine perception outside the structure of the (male) gaze is being proposed here in the thesis through my arts practice. Despite Marks' attempt to devise an embodied relation between the spectator and the film image, I think that in her notion of the haptic erotic the relation between touch and vision is over determined by space and falls back into Lacan's deficient model. In order to find a process in which the audience might encounter an image of the feminine through an embodied process of feminine perception, I will work through the relation between touch, vision and the imaging-apparatus in a different way in *Diagram 1*. These three elements and their relations have historically been grouped together. For example, Jonathan Crary indicates that:

The sense of touch had been an integral part of classical theories of vision in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The subsequent dissociation of touch from sight occurs within a pervasive "separation of the senses" and industrial mapping of the body in the nineteenth century". The loss of touch as a conceptual component

¹²³Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 87.

¹²⁴*Ibid.* p. 93.

of vision meant the unloosening of the eye from the network of referentiality incarnated in tactility and its subjective relation to perceived space.¹²⁵

Crary clearly expresses that touch informed vision in historical approaches to the imaging apparatus. However, Crary still conceives of touch as a constituent of vision. Returning to Marks' proposition, I think that dividing and devising the senses through haptics' dual sensible relation supposes that the hand and the eye do not inform each other along with the other senses. However, I am not proposing a syneesthetic relation or a process of envisioning – though my emphasis maintains (a maternal-feminine process of) embodiment. For a more productive theoretical framework, I will turn to Irigaray's theory of perception in the register of the tangible in which she coins the term *maternal-feminine*.¹²⁶ Her theory of the enfleshed (embodiment) maintains that touching (tangible) begins with a maternal-feminine process of perception which is anterior to vision.

The in utero [...] is more on the side of the maternal feminine.¹ 'In utero, I see nothing (except darkness?), but I hear. Music comes before meaning. A sort of preliminary to meaning, coming after warmth, moisture, softness, kinaesthesia. Do I hear first of all? After touch. But I cannot hear without touching; nor see, moreover. I hear, and what I hear is sexually differentiated.'¹²⁷

My interpretation of Irigaray's theorising is that the maternal-feminine's potential to envelop/touch a pre-nascent body within the uterus structures her perception in a priori to (intrauterine) touching. The next section explores the potential for a feminine form of perception through Irigaray's proposition for maternal-feminine perception in the register of touch/tangible. This is developed further through *Parts 2* and *3* in this thesis through experimentations with the arrangement of the contents of the installation, the making of the props, and a reorientation of the diagrams that plan the installation of *(f)low visibility's* set in

¹²⁵ Crary, J. *Techniques of the Observer*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. (1992), p. 19.

¹²⁶ 'Of course there is a relation of the visible and the tangible. Is the doubling redoubled and crisscrossed? This is less certain. The look cannot take up the tangible. [...] And if I can no doubt unite their powers, I cannot reduce the one to the other. I cannot situate the visible and the tangible in a chiasmus. Perhaps the visible needs the tangible but this need is not reciprocal?' Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), pp. 135-136.

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 140-141. I will elaborate the Irigaray's concept of the maternal feminine further in section: *The Monstrous: Props*.

the nightclub. However, before I can elaborate on my proposition for feminine perception, I will introduce my proposition for developing feminine spatiality in *Diagram 1* in the next section. This proposition is developed through an in-depth analysis of the feminine masquerade in order to structure my approach to the feminine as a process of interiority and exteriority (that emphasises interiority) in the composition of the installation. Proposing touch as a potential register for audience and participant (perception and) reception in the installation, I discuss how my approach to feminine touching might not necessarily be predicated on a geometral perspective as a spatial a priori to vision. In the following section I propose how feminine spatiality could emerge differently to the organisation of depth-perspective in vision through the process of the feminine masquerade. I also develop an approach towards a potential form of feminine spatiality through *Diagram 1* by analysing how:

- the installation's spatiality might arise through the inter-relationality of its contents;
- an audience's and participants' reception might occur through the register of touch.

Diagram 1: The Feminine Masquerade

This section aims to expand on how the installation, in *Diagram 1*, might be spatially composed through a feminine process of *inter-relationality*¹²⁸ between its contents rather than as a (male) perspectival structuration of the field of vision through space in audience and participant reception. A feminised process of inter-relationality is theorised by Irigaray as one which opposes the organisation of male vision as the geometrical relation between things in the world. She proposes that sexually different perception emerges through exchanges between subjects (that meet in the world whilst maintaining their respective differences), and that meaning arises through inter-relations between people and things in the world. Continuing to develop an approach towards composing a potential for feminised relations between the contents of the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub, I also consider my interpretation of the feminine masquerade (discussed in the preceding sections as the spatial displacement of the feminine subject), proposed as a double subjective process of interiority (escape within) and exteriority (appearances in the visible). In order to investigate how the hegemony of phallogocentric vision might be subverted these processes of inter-relationality and the feminine masquerade are mapped as potential processes of feminine spatiality. A feminised process of mapping is proposed in this section through an exploration of the arrangement and composition of the installation's contents, participant interaction and audience reception as described in *Diagram 1*. I also consider what the implications are for the representation of images on-screen, in terms of relations of power that might be affected through the act of looking in the installation. This comprises my proposition for a broader feminised cartographic method which is explored through different possible orientations of the composition and reception in the

¹²⁸ Irigaray, L. *Sharing Needs, Sharing Desire*. In: *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008), pp. 24-30.

design of the diagrams and the experience of different artworks throughout the thesis.

Considering *Diagram 1* as a site that is doubled like the feminine masquerade, I imagine that the installation might spatially compose a *feminine lexicon*¹²⁹ through the props' representation of female body parts as potential markers which inter-relate and shape a feminised scene. The transferral of the representation of the feminine from object to image, through the camera's capture of participant interactions with the props proposed in *Diagram 1* (from the enclosed room to the on-screen image), could affirm the feminine negative as a process of miming. As the audience's first encounter with the participants would be mediated by the on-screen image in *Diagram 1*, the image could appear to the audience as a process of miming and/or simulating the unfolding interaction in the enclosed room. If a process of miming structures the representation of the image, the participants might be determined by the act of performing the fantasy of male desire in the on-screen image for the audience's (voyeur's male) gaze. Through this construct, the installation risks being structured through the masquerade of femininity as theorised by Freud. The position of the on-screen image in relation to the enclosed room in *Diagram 1* could emphasise the exteriorisation of an imaged representation of an interior scene of the feminine.

What could be the reality/truth of the image on-screen and would it be possible to encounter an image of the feminine that gestures her subjectivity in the installation through *Diagram 1*'s proposed design? This question could be posited as a *hysterical* demand for the truth of the image, as I am attempting to represent the feminine negative through an image in the composition of *Diagram 1*. 'The proliferation of fake appearances put in to circulation by the

¹²⁹ I will develop my proposal, in Part 2 and 3 of the thesis, for composing the contents and reception of (f)low visibility as a process of gesturing the feminine, by way of referencing a form of feminine language through the installation's production of images. Irigaray proposes the possibility of a feminine language which might be afforded through the accumulative interrelations between feminine referents (as a form of feminine syntax). See: Irigaray, L. Questions. In: *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp.119-169. See, also: Robinson, H. *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women*. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006).

hysteric'¹³⁰ problematises my proposition because the structure of the feminine (negative) as image is bound-up as the predicate of male desire. To propose to represent the feminine (negative) through a process of imaging in *Diagram 1* seems like a paradoxical attempt at exemplifying her absence in the dominant male paradigm. Proposing a way to manifest a productive and active process of imaging the feminine negative is a tough proposition. As the feminine's structural closeness to and figuration as image in phalloculocentrism already maintains her as the producer of an imagined image which is not of her, or indeed, hers.¹³¹

These queries led me to consider Jean Baudrillard's theory of the *hyperreal*. My analysis of this theory attempts to unpack how the (male) gaze is one-sided and weighted towards the voyeur, and how the feminine negative is composed as a process of absences and perpetual losses. Baudrillard discusses the problems of representing the body and the processes of looking/seeing in an encounter with a hyperreal body as follows:

a particular scene of a hyperrealist exhibition at Beaubourg, of flesh-colored, absolutely realistic and naked sculptures, or rather mannequins in unequivocal, banal positions [...] The reaction of the people was interesting. They leaned over to see something, to look at the texture of the skin, the pubic hair, everything, but there was nothing to see. Some even wanted to touch the bodies to test their reality, but of course that didn't work because everything was already there. The exhibition did not even fool the eye. When one has been visually deceived one takes pleasure in guessing, and even if there is no intent to deceive, to fool, the aesthetic and tactile pleasure produced by certain forms involves a kind of divination [...] Not even a trace of illusion remains underneath the veracity of the hair. Precisely because there is nothing to see, people approach, lean over and flair out this hallucination hyper-resemblance, haunting in its friendliness.¹³²

I think that Baudrillard's account of this hyperreal exhibition affirms the maxim of phalloculocentric vision, compounding the emptiness of the image that

¹³⁰ Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 125.

¹³¹ 'Poised in suspense between the faculties of the male subject, woman cannot be decided about, and her beauty serves to promote the free play of mind. And of course what matters is not the existence of the object—as such it is indifferent—but the simple effect of a representation upon the subject, its reflection, that is, in the imagination of man.' Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 207.

¹³² Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988), pp. 30-31.

‘does not look back’.¹³³ Baudrillard posits that the original image is ‘*copied in excess*’¹³⁴ and that the original is lost in the *age of mechanical reproduction*.¹³⁵ I think that Baudrillard’s account of the image as absence can be aligned with phallogocentrism’s structuration of woman as absent image. Furthermore, reflecting on Western Judeo-Christian sensibilities in which man is the predicate of the original,¹³⁶ woman is anachronistically figured as man’s copy, figured as the same as him, and as a result, woman is an absent subjectivity.¹³⁷ Discussing the feminine as a site of negation, Rosie Braidotti maintains that when attempting to place the feminine one finds that ‘there is no-body there’.¹³⁸ Further to this account on the whereabouts of the feminine negative, in response to Irigaray’s work on the specula, Hilary Robinson says that ‘it sees that woman is the other of its same; it sees she has nothing to see; it sees only the symmetrical paradox’.¹³⁹ In Irigaray’s conceptualisation of the feminine negative ‘woman remains a nothing at all, or this all at nothing, in which each (male) one seeks to find the means to re-plenish the resemblance of self (as) same’.¹⁴⁰ I think that Baudrillard’s interpretation of the image’s absence as ‘an image where there is nothing to see’,¹⁴¹ is analogous to woman as an absent image. According to Baudrillard the copy, simulation, is the image proper, it is *more real than real*. Analogously, in order for the woman to become (normal) she attempts to mimic man’s desire as a silent image, mirroring him she copies his desire endlessly by appearing and disappearing as a series of images under his gaze like a simulation of the real, in Baudrillard’s terms. The issue here is

¹³³ Fer, B. *Bordering on Blank: Eva Hesse and Minimalism*. In: Mignon, N. (ed.) *Eva Hesse*. London: MIT Press, (2002), pp. 66-67.

¹³⁴ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988).

¹³⁵ Benjamin, W. *The Age of Art in Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin, (2008).

¹³⁶ ‘Man is the procreator, that sexual production-reproduction is referable to his “activity” alone.’ Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 18.

¹³⁷ I will discuss the structuration of the feminine as a negative mirror that reflects the Same as predicated on the law of the father in section Diagram 2.

¹³⁸ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1994) p. 47.

¹³⁹ Robinson, H. *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women*. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006), p. 66.

¹⁴⁰ Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 227.

¹⁴¹ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988), p. 31.

not only one of simulation of the object as a correlative denial of the real, but of the simulation of the feminine as a replication of appearances in the real, as the model of *normal woman* (as coined by Freud).

Equally, Baudrillard's exasperation about the project of simulation could be inversely interpreted as the problem of the feminine masquerade (in terms of both subject and object), in which the simulacrum vis-à-vis the masquerade (as determined by Freud) becomes the only visible surface and visible truth in the phalloculocentric project's aim to other. In Robinson's interpretation of the feminine masquerade she says that:

Although the masquerade of femininity will always already have been to 'act like' the value recognized by/for the male, it is important to note that this 'femininity' was assigned to woman as an inferior copy of man's relation to his origin.¹⁴²

In my interpretation of the feminine masquerade, however, woman's subjectivity is structured as a doubled subjectivity, between interiority and exteriority.¹⁴³ I propose that when she is subsumed in her interiority her subjectivity's emergence in the visible is composed of blanks (in the negative), interrupting the continuity of (a male construction of) visible space.¹⁴⁴ It is precisely because of the feminine's interiorising tendencies that her subjectivity might affect an image of herself differently through a method of interruption.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Irigaray proposes that the feminine masquerade is a strategy to recover some form of desire, despite it being man's desire.

¹⁴² Robinson, H. *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women*. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006) p. 34.

¹⁴³ Whilst the feminine is constructed in the visible as appearance, she cultivates a perpetual reserve (an elsewhere) for herself that she can escape to.

¹⁴⁴ Irigaray theorises that the feminine has a different sense of space and time to the male subject. Though in the following quote Irigaray explains that the feminine negative is scattered by the male subject's domination of her space and time, in Part 2 and 3 of the thesis I will propose that this process of dispersal could be a productive way to think through the possibility for a feminised image. 'She is never here and now because it is she who sets up that eternal elsewhere from which the "subject" continues to draw his reserves, his re-sources, through without being able to recognize them/her. She is uprooted from matter, from the earth, yet, but still, she is already scattered into x number of places that are never gathered together into anything she knows of herself, and these remain the basis of (re)production—particularly of discourse—in all its forms.' Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 227.

¹⁴⁵ Later in the thesis I propose how a process of interruption in the continuity of the image might create images that emerge through a feminine register.

I think the masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own. In the masquerade, they submit to the dominant economy of desire in an attempt to remain "on the market" in spite of everything. But they are there as objects for sexual enjoyment, not as those who enjoy.¹⁴⁶

However, I am not attempting to situate the masquerade as a potential site for recuperating feminine desire. I am interpreting the feminine masquerade as a potentially sexually differentiated subjective process which is doubled both temporally and spatially as a process that could subvert the phalloculocentric structuration of the feminine. I am using this doubled subjective structure of interiority and exteriority (of the body) in order to emphasise her interiority as analogous to the double spatial structure of the installation. My attempt to interpret *Diagram 1* through the doubled subjective feminine emergence in the masquerade does not mean that space is being considered as geometrically figured (as proposed by Lacan) but rather, that *Diagram 1* is spatially doubled like the masquerade between:

- the actual site (the room in which participants might interact with props and be videoed).
- and the representative site (displayed through the on-screen projections).

Although I am proposing that *Diagram 1* is spatially doubled like my interpretation of the feminine masquerade, this framework is not being proposed as a process of confusion or of capture in participant interaction and audience reception. I am not attempting to, as Baudrillard puts it, 'fool the eye' alone.¹⁴⁷ The installation is not being figured as a perceptual trickster. Similarly, I am not attempting to affirm Lacan's position, whereby 'in this matter of the visible, everything is a trap. There is not a single one of the divisions, a single one of the double sides that the function of vision presents, that is not manifested to us as a labyrinth'.¹⁴⁸ (Entering into a labyrinth is conventionally associated with the confusion of orientation). I do not intend to compose the installation as a

¹⁴⁶ Irigaray, L. *This Sex which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985) pp. 133 – 134.

¹⁴⁷ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988), pp. 30 – 31.

¹⁴⁸ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979) p. 93.

producer of confusing spaces and images of the feminine, because the feminine is determined as confusion in phalloculocentrism. The doubling I have proposed relies on a spatial/subjective/image relation which is not fixed between feminine interiority and exteriority, the route between these is not set-out (prescribed) like a labyrinth. Interrupting the continuity of the (male) gaze through the deceptive mechanisms of the *trick* and the *trap* (described by Baudrillard and Lacan), in an attempt to disrupt the order of the representation of the feminine image in the visible, would shore-up the representation of the feminine image as a process of hysterical mimicry of male desire and moreover as a hysterical process of deception because:

Her neurosis would be recognized as a counterfeit or parody of an artistic process [...] Artifice, lie, deception, snare—these are the kinds of judgements society confers upon the tableaux, the scenes, the dramas, the pantomimes produced by the hysteric.¹⁴⁹

Approaching the enclosed room and the transmission of the image to the screen outside the room as a process of Freud's situation of the hysteric could limit the on-screen image to being a site which simply copies the interior of the enclosed room. It might therefore be more useful to reflect on the contents of the enclosed room in relation to Lacan's proposition. In Greek Mythology the labyrinth was a structure built to contain/hide a monstrous and fearful animal/human abomination from Pasiphaë's womb: the Minotaur. Though the labyrinth is likened to the womb,¹⁵⁰ *Diagram 1* is not an attempt at *containing* potential monsters. I situate the props as feminised monsters that should be explored by participants rather than hidden from them. I propose that the double space might orientate the image of the feminine differently as a process of disruption of her representation as his image (of desire) through transferring images from one space to another. I would rather discuss the spatial orientation of the image in *Diagram 1* through Bracha Ettinger's proposal for the *matrixial borderspace* which concerns a different feminine sense of space and time and

¹⁴⁹ Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 125.

¹⁵⁰ Mahon, A. *Surrealism, Desire and Labyrinthine Space*. (11/05/07). In: *Surreal Things: Surrealism And Design International Conference*, London: Victoria & Albert Museum. (11/05/07 – 12/05/07).

suggests that she emerges between (in the negative) images. Judith Butler reflects on Ettinger's proposition,

And as yet, in Bracha's tableaux, the image is still there, coming towards us, fading away, a moment frozen in its doubleness, layered, filtered. The suspension of time conditions the emergence of a space that suspends the sequential ordering of time. We cannot tell our story here, nor can we offer a recognition in which a gaze seeks to become commensurate with what it sees. We are invited into a space in which we are not one, cannot be, and yet we are not without the capacity to see. We see here as a child or, perhaps, an infant, whose body is given as the remnants of another's trauma and desires. What is it we seek to recognize here? That she is gone, that she is staying? Eurydice cannot be captured, cannot be had. She appears only in the moment in which we are dispossessed of her.¹⁵¹

Rather than situating the feminine negative through the absences in *trauma* (as defined by Ettinger), I want to represent women's sexual reproductive system (the props) as representations of the mother in the negative as an active process of the feminine.

Composing the installation in relation to participant interaction could structure it as a dialectic of theatre: as a site that doubles. However, the doubling would not be perfect and would not necessarily be, in Baudrillard's words: '*more real than real*'.¹⁵² I think that in *Diagram 1* the activity might be spatially doubled because participant activity would be occurring in two spaces at once: in the room and on the screen outside the room. However, although this doubling process would be enacted by the relation between the participant in the room and their image on-screen outside it, this process (the reception of the on-screen image) would only be available to the audience. The process of doubling would not be available to the participant; this could be regarded as a context which is constructed for participants to intimate their imagined image; imagined because the screen would not be visible to them inside the room.

¹⁵¹ Ettinger describes how the subject lacks because of inherited memories (memories inherited from parents, etc.) which do not belong to the subject but are appropriated and embodied, but incapable of completion, always subject to absencing in the subject. She structures the feminine negative's perpetual losses and absences through this process, as one of trauma, as the lack of memory of the other, in her psychoanalytic/arts practice. Though I am interested in the way Ettinger attempts to manifest a feminised image as a process of between, I will not be following her proposition of trauma setting the scene of potential for feminine representation. Butler, J. Foreword: Bracha's Eurydice. In: Ettinger, B. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2006), p. xii.

¹⁵² Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988).

They might imagine 'a gaze imagined by [...them] in the field of the other'¹⁵³ watching them (in terms of Lacan's interpretation of Sartre's notion of the power of the *facticity* of the other). Therefore I think that *Diagram 1* seems to fail to even-out the relation of the gaze between the participant and the audience, and could therefore give rise to the audience's domination over the participants' image. Perhaps both spaces need to be available at the same time to the audience and to the participants in the installation?

Diagram 1 could be seen to construct an autoerotic self-imaging installation that is doubled in two spaces, as a narcissistic enterprise that is split between two spaces: the interior of the room (in the actual), and the exterior on-screen image (as the representation). Allegorically, the proposed set-up of the installation in *Diagram 1* could be interpreted through the feminine masquerade as follows:

- the enclosed room for participant interaction with the props that represent women's body parts could be paralleled with the feminine's invisible interiority;
- as a space which is not directly visible, vis-à-vis the enclosed room, would not be visible in an actual sense to the audience, and would be organised with the props as a feminine space;
- the images on-screen could be interpreted as analogous with the feminine's appearance as image (in a phalloculocentric construct of the visible and similarly to apparatus theory's approach to the screen in cinematic viewing), as proper feminine images which mime the (male orientated) desire of those (the audience) who look at the images unfolding on-screen.

However, splitting the spaces between the interior and exterior of the visible body in the feminine masquerade in the interpretation of *Diagram 1* is not as clear cut as these initial observations may suggest. There is a link between the interior and exterior of the room and its ensuing representation: the camera

¹⁵³ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 84.

– which thus far is still positioned as a *keyhole* (in terms of Lacan’s theorising of voyeurism).¹⁵⁴ Captured by the audience’s gaze through the camera/screen (keyhole), the participant would not be able to return the gaze of the audience – in this way *Diagram 1* runs the risk of constructing the installation as a woman who cannot return the gaze of the voyeur.

Woman has no gaze, no discourse for her specific specularization that would allow her to identify with herself (as same)—to return into the self—or to break free of the natural specular process that now holds her—to get out of the self.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, I think that *Diagram 1* could reduce participants to performing for the camera/image/audience; and a hysterical attempt at miming what they imagine the audience wants to see could unfold.

And why does she comply so readily? Because she is suggestible? Hysterical? [...] How could she be otherwise, even in those perversities which she stoops to in order to “please” and to live up to the “femininity” expected of her? How could she be anything but suggestible and hysterical when her sexual instincts have been castrated, her sexual feelings, representatives, and representations forbidden? [...] The problem is that the ludic mimicry, the fiction, the “make-believe,” the “let’s pretend”—which, as we know made the hysteric subject to all kinds of disbelief, oppression, and ridicule—are stopped short, impeded *controlled by a master-signifier*, the Phallus, and by its representative(s).¹⁵⁶

Through this interpretation, the position of the camera and the screen in *Diagram 1* is in danger of replicating Lacan’s model of the possessive (phallic) gaze, because *Diagram 1* only facilitates the possibility of (an audiences’) one-sided-watching. Similarly to my interpretation of the possibility of a hysterical process of representing participation/feminine, as they would potentially only be able to mime what they imagine their image to be in the imagined gaze in the field of the other. In Irigaray’s words: ‘If, that is, the interpreter-subject did not desire “this” (the id) to continue sustaining the proliferation of images (of self), as a *trompe-l’œil* backcloth for the same’s show, for a theatre of the identical’.¹⁵⁷ This dynamic problematically predicates notions of ownership, which seems like

¹⁵⁴ ‘Very often I have been photographed [...] and knew it. Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of “posing,” I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image. This transformation is an active one: I feel that the Photograph creates my body or mortifies it, according to its caprice.’ Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida*. London: Vintage, (2000), pp. 10-11.

¹⁵⁵ Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 224.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 59-60.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 138.

the project of a patriarchal system,¹⁵⁸ enslaving the other as property (the participant) through the watchful eye of the master (the audience). The audience, in this set-up, might covet and appropriate the participant as image through their gaze and consequently possess the participant as property as their object in their field of vision.¹⁵⁹

In this dynamic I think that the apparatus, the camera and projectors, would control the scene. The apparatus would elevate and enlarge the visible (with respect to the body's other senses) in the audience's reception of the image. Regarded by a camera positioned high above them, the participants would be regarded by another kind of subjectivity, by the electronic-eye of the camera.¹⁶⁰ In this relation the camera and the audience would become the sleeping masters controlling the participants' activities.¹⁶¹ I think that this set-up could structure the installation as an apparatus for hysterical seduction of an audience through a spectacle display of images. The participants could be reduced to a passive position and be stripped of the possibility to act from a position of desire. Through this interpretation I think that the installation is in danger of being constructed analogously like woman in a phallogocentric framework, as a spectacle, as appearance, and a seducer that mirrors his desire. Without the capacity for her own desire to be represented, the negation of her desire would be represented by the position of the participant in the installation. The relationship of the camera, screen and audience to the participant would make the participants objects of observation on-screen, curiosities, infinitely othering and fetishising the participants (similarly to watching a peep-show). *Diagram 1* seems to privilege the audience's power to see, potentially affirming a phallogocentric form of vision, by instituting the

¹⁵⁸ Irigaray, L. *Between East and West*. New York: Columbia University Press, (2002), p. x.

¹⁵⁹ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979).

¹⁶⁰ Haraway, D. *Situated Knowledges*. In: Lykke, N. & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: feminist confrontations with science, medicine, and cyberspace*. London: Zed Books, (1996).

¹⁶¹ The sleeping or non-interfering master is explored in the paradox of the free slave, where it is explained that: 'domination can occur without interference, because it requires only that someone have the capacity to interfere arbitrarily in your affairs; no one need actually interfere'. Pettit, P. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1997), p. 23.

gaze as a method of capture. With watching, looking, observing, visibility potentially mediating the scene, *Diagram 1* seems reminiscent of the ethically problematic beginnings of ethnographic research – that began as a project of othering par excellence. Denying the participants the possibility of intervening in or mediating the productions and receptions of the technological apparatus, the phallogocentric surveillance apparatus' project of visual transfer would simply be reiterated through the set-up of *Diagram 1*.

In the following section I expand on these interpretations by analysing how I am approaching the issue of the surveillance apparatus and the position of the camera in *Diagram 1*. This is carried out through an exploration of the ideological structuration of the surveillance apparatus' and its resemblance to voyeurism:

- as an apparatus instituted by invisible corporations that monitor the public;
- as an apparatus that aims to covertly see those that are unaware of its watchful eye.

Surveillance Apparatus

In this section I aim to set-out the theoretical framework of surveillance apparatus in relation to its conceptual involvement in my arts practice. With a view to composing the installation through a feminised and maternalised process my artworks in this thesis conceptually and materially challenge the phallogulocentric structuration of the camera, (surveillance apparatus). The camera and the screen are conventionally figured as an ocularcentric apparatus par excellence because these are structured through vision and understood as representing the visible. This section unpacks the potential production, reception and representation of the camera and the images that might be produced by it in *Diagram 1*.

This section explores how *Diagram 1*'s proposition might be similar to the logic of surveillance apparatus in terms of the potential for an image to be captured (i.e. enclosed room) and transmitted elsewhere (i.e. on-screen) to an audience which would not be visible to the person/site captured. In this way surveillance apparatus' conceptual framework is appropriate to my project because it is situated as the facilitator of remote viewing. The ontological construction of the camera (surveillance apparatus) has until now in the thesis problematically constituted *Diagram 1* specifically within a phallogulocentric framework in terms of: narcissism and fetishism, and voyeurism and exhibitionism. This section aims to depart from this structuration set-out in *Diagram 1*.

My interpretation of the conceptual framework of surveillance apparatus through the gaze and its alignment with phallogulocentrism emphasises my arts practice's interrogation of the context of surveillance, over film, video or television.¹⁶² I define surveillance apparatus differently from these other mediated screen-based imaging processes. I elaborate on the difference

¹⁶² Although I will continue to reflect on the process of cinematic experience because it is bound-up in the dialectic of the look, concerning the reception of the image and the audiences relation to the apparatus which I will continue to explain through the diagrams in the thesis.

between the potent power of the surveillance camera (even as a simulation of a camera) and the simulated image produced by surveillance apparatus. I discuss surveillance apparatus and its image production in terms of its visibility and invisibility.

The culturally constructed myth of surveillance is ideologically constituted as an aid in policing the masses and forecasting the future through the register of the visible. In this way, surveillance apparatus is constructed as a mode of capture and as a tool for discerning truth through capturing an other. I think that there is a shared sensibility between surveillance apparatus' conceptual framework and a phalloculocentric structuration, as both are subject to being figured through the oppressive capture of the gaze. They both share a commonality in terms of the uneven power relations between the one who watches and the one who is watched, which is determined by the one who has the power to gaze. I think that the (male) gaze structures both the operation and reception of surveillance apparatus and the phalloculocentric structuration of the feminine as projects of possession of the other in the visible,

- as both are composed through a gaze that captures the other:
 - **Surveillance apparatus'** conceptual framework captures the other as image without the captured other necessarily consenting to or being in the knowledge of the apparatus' operations and capture. Through surveillance equipment's capture of the other, the other is potentially composed as image, possession and property of the surveillance apparatus. Moreover, the image of the other who is captured might be interpreted as the property of the remote watcher (the voyeur) who retains the power to look at and receive the image.
 - **Phalloculocentrism** composes the feminine in the visible as appearance; the feminine/exhibitionist might not be able to return the gaze because in this relation she could be figured through his narcissism as his image, meaning that he is the only one that has

the power to look. Potentially reflecting him, she is captured, possessed and figured as appearance through his gaze.

- Correlation between surveillance apparatus' interpretation through the gaze and the phallogocentric structure of the feminine under the (male) gaze:
 - In both cases, the gaze seems to have the power to covet and constitute the other, the one who is watched in the visible as an image of his/the apparatus' system of capture and desire. In both cases, whether it is the one who watches the surveillance apparatus' monitor's image or the man who figures woman as an imaginary image through the keyhole, the other is subjugated by the power of the one whose look takes possession of the other. Potentially possessing the other as property, the one who is watched might be considered as being constituted through and controlled by the logic of the (male) gaze.

I think that the potentially uneven power relations (in terms of the one who watches and the one who is watched) between participants, the audience, and surveillance apparatus proposed in *Diagram 1* might be determined by different levels of visibility, through different spaces (the enclosed room and the screen) and different viewing perspectives in participant interaction and audience reception. These different aspects would be connected and mediated by the camera because it would be the link between the two spaces (the room and the screen in *Diagram 1*). The camera, in this relation, can be interpreted as being temporally and spatially situated differently to film, video and television, since (in *Diagram 1*) the camera's feed would be live, unedited and uninterrupted in its transmission from the enclosed room to the laptop and in-turn to the projector and onto the screen. The unedited image (projection) of the live-feed from the camera in the enclosed room would not be narrativised like a film might be (in terms of the traditional conventions of film) because the unfolding image would be shown live in the installation. In *Diagram 1* the camera would be situated as

the primary observer of the scene of the installation (in terms of the logic of surveillance) as a different kind of observer to the camera, which composes a film. Surveillance apparatus and film each have a different temporal construction which distinguishes them from each other, in terms of the distance between the image captured and the viewer's reception of the image. In surveillance apparatus the remote watcher receives the image live, in a film the camera's capture is always subject to editing. In *Diagram 1* the feed from the camera in the enclosed room would not only be transmitted live to the screen (via the laptop), but, also, the site of capture and image reception would be spatially proximal. Surveillance apparatus' construction of the image is radically different to the composition of a film image because in film the spatial and temporal relation between the camera's capture, site captured and the image received by an audience are disconnected. Film is ontologically constructed as a rendition of a past dead narrative.¹⁶³ Rather than as a past narrative, surveillance apparatus is socially and culturally constituted as a process of image capture which is predicated on pre-empting a situation in which an image of a particular kind of activity *should* be captured. Predicting future images the surveillance camera is ideologically constructed as a mode of foreseeing, an eye that forecasts futures, for example: predicting the site of criminal activity.¹⁶⁴

I am concerned with how surveillance apparatus is socially and culturally constructed as a truth mechanism that is responsible for accurate *records of reality*.¹⁶⁵ Surveillance equipment destabilises distinctions between the public and private spheres, especially in terms of surveillance equipment kits for the home. Historically, television has been constructed as a version of reality and pitted against film's edited and narrativised form because of television's live broadcast (e.g. game-shows, news, etc.). However, in the context of contemporary mediatised representations, the boundaries between what is live and what is subject to post-production are less clear, as mixing tropes of

¹⁶³ Baudry, J.P. Ideological Effects of the Basic Apparatus. In: Rosen, P. (ed.) *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology, A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), pp. 294.

¹⁶⁴ Bogard, W. *The Simulation of Surveillance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1996).

¹⁶⁵ Bogard, W. *The Simulation of Surveillance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1996).

television and film is common practice. This is due to the rise in the digitised culture of information, and communication, e.g.: internet and video, as Philip Auslander remarks on in his theory of *liveness*.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, film and television are no longer simply formally divided as either representing a form of liveness or a lack thereof, or between public viewing, e.g. seeing films at the cinema, and private viewing, e.g. watching television at home, since they have also been reconfigured in terms of their material make-up, i.e.: film and video are not considered as specifically different to each other in contemporary approaches to these media and their representations. For example, today, the reception of a film or a video on-screen remains the same. Furthermore, according to Marks:

It is commonly argued that film is a tactile medium and video is an optical one, since film can be actually worked with the hands. Now that more films are edited and postproduced with video or computer technologies, this distinction is losing its significance. Many [...] properties are common to video and film, such as changes in focal length, graininess (produced differently in each medium), and effects of under- and overexposure.¹⁶⁷

In addition, the gap in the treatment of film and video is closing because video is now considered a malleable material, a material subject to decay, to pixel degradation and colour variation, similar to film's material decay and tactility.¹⁶⁸ It is important to note that surveillance equipments' image output is video, and crucially, that it is a material subject to manipulation. However, the culturally constructed myth about surveillance apparatus being a tool for capturing a visible truth prevails, because coupled with the notion of the infallibility of the machine and the designed intent of the mechanism, surveillance apparatus is pre-inscribed as an evidential producer of the real (as was the photograph as an ethnographic tool). The myth about surveillance is that it produces necessarily truer images than standard film, video and

¹⁶⁶ 'I have described examples of the incursion of mediatization into a range of live performance events at some length to make the point that, within our mediatized culture, whatever distinction we may have supposed there to be between live and mediatized events is collapsing because live events are increasingly either made to be reproduced or are becoming ever more identical with mediatized ones'. Auslander, P. *Liveness*. New York: Routledge, (1999), p. 35.

¹⁶⁷ Marks, L. U. *Touch*. London: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), pp. 9 – 10.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

television. This myth might be interpreted as being figured through surveillance equipment's task:

- intent to capture criminal activity,
- and/or intent to deter criminal activity.

Reflecting on surveillance apparatus' appearance (the miniaturisation of the apparatus) and its operation of capture and image production, Baudrillard remarks 'the miniaturization, of remote control [...] has come'.¹⁶⁹ Aligning this process of miniaturisation with the construction of the feminine (negative) in phallococentrism, I think that what is at stake is a relation between visibility, power and mastery of the image through the (male) gaze. Surveillance apparatus' ideological construction seems to be predicated on its power to look and, moreover, on the visibility and/or invisibility of the camera's looks/capture. Depending on the context surveillance apparatus might be considered as being either miniaturised or aggrandised, meaning that the camera is either hidden, to capture an activity or displayed in order to deter an activity. Perhaps the camera's process of capture is structured through the (male) gaze and its miniaturisation concerns the simulation and elevation of the on-screen image as the site of the apparatus' proper appearance.

Although surveillance apparatus has no camera man per say, the desiring (male) gaze is nevertheless preserved as that of the institution/person that installs it, even though they are physically distanced from the apparatus. I propose that the gaze of surveillance apparatus subjugates the one who is observed because the observer is unknown to them, the gaze of the observer is deferred to the site of the screen (rather than gazing through the camera lens). Sometimes, though, this is not the case, as there are times when the camera is a simulation (which does not capture images but masquerades as a camera). However, the effect on those that encounter it is the same – maintaining the presence of an unidentifiable eye. Perhaps the other who is captured by the surveillance camera surveying the scene becomes conscious of being watched,

¹⁶⁹ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988).

whether they are watched or not the camera fixes this notion, as it substitutes the eye.

Surveillance apparatus' production and reception is further distinguished from film, video and television by the way in which its image is consumed. Surveillance apparatus is structured as an invisible apparatus, arguably similar to the canon of film, video and television's image-centric output (though post-structuralist approaches to these media deconstruct the image and the apparatus). The dissemination and consumption of the image though, is markedly different; while film, video and television images are accessible to the public and are publically disseminated and consumed (whether it be in a private or public context), typically, surveillance apparatus' image is not accessible or disseminated to the public at large. The image is usually privately received by a remote watcher. I think that the desiring look of surveillance apparatus is inscribed when it is installed, which is predicated on the capture of the fantasy of the imaginary image (e.g. criminal activity). The image produced by surveillance apparatus is not usually visible to the public, or available as a publically consumable commodity because the image is not necessarily bought by, circulated through, or produced for public consumption. As the image remains unattainable it could be interpreted as the apparatus' most precious process of production and might construct the apparatus' enterprise in the visible as a process of capturing absented images. This is significantly different from film, video and television, where the image is more likely to be encountered by the public than the apparatus that constructs a film, video, or television image.

Moreover, the socio-cultural construction of surveillance apparatus denies the possibility of its output (the image) being fabricated. I think this framework is wholly implausible given that surveillance apparatus' video capture is not only digital, which is a material subject to manipulation, but also structured as an invisible image which is not publically available. Surveillance video differs significantly from other mediatised structures (such as film and television) specifically because of its particular ontological relation to capture:

- capture with a specific aim to record a visible truth and to provide evidence for the actual capture of a person (and their potential incarceration),
- and its different sense of space and time.

In this way surveillance equipment is a compelling boundary mechanism that serves as the interlocutor between the watchful real eye of the remote observer and the simulated eye of the camera, which predicates the substitution of the look of the remote observer. Applying this structural relation to the interpretation of *Diagram 1*, perhaps the remote observer would be the audience and the camera in the enclosed room would substitute the look of the audience for the participant.

I think that the participants' encounter with the screen in *Diagram 1* could problematically compose the participants as a captured, intelligible, visible surface. The screen might be encountered as a surface produced by the logic of surveillance apparatus and could simply reinforce a phallocentric structure. William Bogard's concern with the processes of visibility and invisibility of surveillance apparatus' construction demonstrates this issue saying that by: 'allowing screens to substitute for experience, [as] profiles to make our judgments – the greater the refinement, and the invisibility, of surveillance apparatus'.¹⁷⁰

Through my arts practice I challenge the proper project of surveillance equipment – that of recording and documenting reality par excellence – by moving beyond the economies of surface in surveillance equipment's project's aim to simulate, in which the appearance of the subject is always inauthentically repeated. 'Simulation performs its own operation on reality – not to reveal it as an essence or signified behind the surface, but to dispose it as a visible (perceptible) surface, to dismantle the "real" surface in order to better "realize" the appearances'.¹⁷¹ I attempt to refigure the structuration of surveillance apparatus' phallocentric tendencies through sexually

¹⁷⁰ Bogard, W. *The Simulation of Surveillance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1996) p.29.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 35.

differentiating perception (in the register of the feminine) in the production and reception of surveillance apparatus' images in my plan for the composition of *(f)low visibility*. The problem, as outlined by Bogard, of what might indeed be considered as a visible surface in surveillance apparatus' various forms of representation, underscores my concerns with the discourses of the visible, analogously with phallogocentric structuration of the feminine i.e.:

- the visibility of the equipment itself, and the visibility of the internal digital workings of the equipment.¹⁷²

The simulation produced on-screen through surveillance equipment compounds the technological apparatus' invisibility, since it is the surveillance apparatus that is responsible for producing the image that is in the end rendered imperceptible. In my interpretation surveillance equipment's spatial concealment, material scale reduction, and imperceptible capture and production compose its material rendition and condition through the logic of invisibility. These structural conditions of invisibility purportedly help the apparatus' ideologically constructed aim: to better realise the appearance of reality in its production of images by capturing a public that is unaware of the apparatus' process of observation. Surveillance equipment's aim rests in the representation of the captured image as a revelation of truth. I think that the supposedly uninterrupted transference of (its ideologically upheld version of) reality from the camera's capture of the image to the camera's live transmission of the image to the screen, prevents any possibility of entering into surveillance apparatus' purported visible enterprise. I think that through this very process the screen masks the apparatus. As a result, the outcome, the on-screen image seems to structure the logic of surveillance apparatus through its intent to capture, whereby the image becomes the only visible aspect of the apparatus. The apparatus is determined in terms of its visible output: the image, and not in terms of the apparatus' actual materiality or processes. The image takes precedence (ideologically) over the rest of the apparatus and is regarded as

¹⁷² 'Digital video's structuring principle is the vast database of information: of frames, pixels, 1s and 0s (choose your unit)'. Marks, L. U. Touch. London: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), p.148.

evidencing reality (e.g. in court), that is evidence of surveillance apparatus' only visible surface, even though the image is rarely encountered or actually made visible (to the public). This is part of surveillance equipment's underlying project of invisibility, which conceals, veils, disregards and diverts attention from the apparatus in order to (paradoxically) affect an image of truth.¹⁷³ As it records activities which are not necessarily performed for it, the fictional construction of surveillance apparatus seems to compose it as a smooth transitioning tool that witnesses, records and presents the real, under the umbrella of a singular and unified (male) gaze. The myth of constancy of surveillance apparatus maintains that it is not interrupted by the potential instability and/or incredibility of the machine's representation of an image.

Perhaps surveillance equipment is veiled as it is seen to interrupt the image's perfect clean simulation. Hiding surveillance equipment's body from the field of vision, and only noting the image made by it, only veils surveillance equipment further, elevates the brilliance of the image and subsumes the apparatus that makes the image appear, rendering the equipment body dead and invisible.

By dint of meaning, information, and transience our societies have passed beyond the limit point, that of permanent ecstasy: the ecstasy of the social (the masses), the body (obesity), sex (obscenity), violence (terror), and information (simulation). If, in fact, the era of transgression has ended, it is that things themselves have transgressed their own limits. If we can no longer reconcile things with their essence, it is because they have mocked and surpassed their own definition. They have become [...] more real than real (simulation).¹⁷⁴

Baudrillard explains that the *essence* (aura) of the thing itself is no longer existent/relevant in our relation to the things around us in the world. He theorises that our relation to the visible has become absorbed by surface, he develops this idea through mediatization, claiming that the visible is too visible – *pornographic*. Moreover, he claims that through the simulation of the real, all that remains is our *obscene* relation to the visible in terms of our encounters

¹⁷³ 'Presencing and representing have to do with revealing, unveiling, (Greek: Aletheia) with truth (Latin: Veritas)'. Heidegger, M. The Question Concerning Technology. In: Hanks, C. (ed.) Technology and Values. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, (2010).

¹⁷⁴ Baudrillard, J. The Ecstasy of Communication. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988), pp.82 – 83.

with (simulated) appearances. In my interpretation of surveillance apparatus' operations (in the case in which surveillance apparatus is maintained as invisible) the image, vis-à-vis its appearance, is elevated. Reflecting briefly on *Diagram 1*, I think that it proposes to uphold the appearance of the image outside the enclosed room as a pure simulation, as more real than the interior of the enclosed room, as the on-screen image would become the scene's only visible surface.

Diagram 1 also positions the (surveillance) camera as a visible mechanism of capture. The participant under the omnipresent gaze of the camera in the enclosed room might become self-conscious, conscious of being observed by the camera in this relation. Therefore I think that *Diagram 1* seems to propose to instil the two central problems of the (male) gaze evident in the ideological construction of surveillance apparatus. The two central problems are, first, that the voyeurs (desiring) gaze might be structured through the camera's/audience's reception of the image outside the room. Second, that the image could be exhibited/displayed as a simulation/absence of the real scene (the participants' interaction in the enclosed room) as an exteriorised image in the visible for the voyeur's/audience's pleasure, whereby the participant might perform for them.

In the next section I address the operations of the camera and the on-screen image in *Diagram 1*, in terms of the desiring (male) gaze, between the video/surveillance apparatus/audience and the image as a display of the simulation/mimicry of the desiring look. This analysis is carried out through a video I made, *A Room of One's Own*. From a feminist position I critique Lacan's construction of the (male) gaze in detail through the video artwork. I discuss how the feminine might interrupt the continuity of the image through displacing the audience's relation to the operations of the video/surveillance apparatus. Reflecting on *A Room of One's Own* video's representation of the feminine I question how the (video/surveillance/cinematic) apparatus' and the audience's desiring (male) look might be de-centred so as to give agency to the one (woman) who is watched and constructed as image. This analysis attempts to

open-up the position of the camera and its relation to imaging the participant and the installations contents (in *Diagram 1*).

Video: A Room of One's Own



Fig. iii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

In the preceding sections my concern has been with the construction of *Diagram 1* and the problems of the female/woman/feminine's figuration in phallogulocentrism. These problems have been centred on a critique of *narcissism* and *fetishism* as determined by Freud. I also defined phallogulocentrism in relation to the feminine masquerade and hysteria in my situation of the feminine negative.

In this section I pick-up on the central thread of the previous section, *Surveillance Apparatus*. This thread concerns notions of capture and possession of an unsuspecting, non-consenting and disempowered other in the visible; and the situation of the camera as (a phallic/potent) eye that overpowers the one that is observed in relation to the structure of the feminine under the (male) gaze. I give a deeper account of the *gaze* as a 'hidden gaze', constituted through the 'screen',¹⁷⁵ by analysing a video I made, *A Room of One's Own* (2010) (which can be found on the DVD in *Appendix 1*). Through this video artwork I explore the ways in which performing the feminine might disrupt the gaze of the camera person, the camera and the audience. I explore different processes of disruption through a number of ways, these include:

- the image of the feminine being disrupted by producing multiple images of

¹⁷⁵ 'And if I am anything in the picture, it is always in the form of a screen, which I earlier called the stain, the spot'. Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998) p. 97.

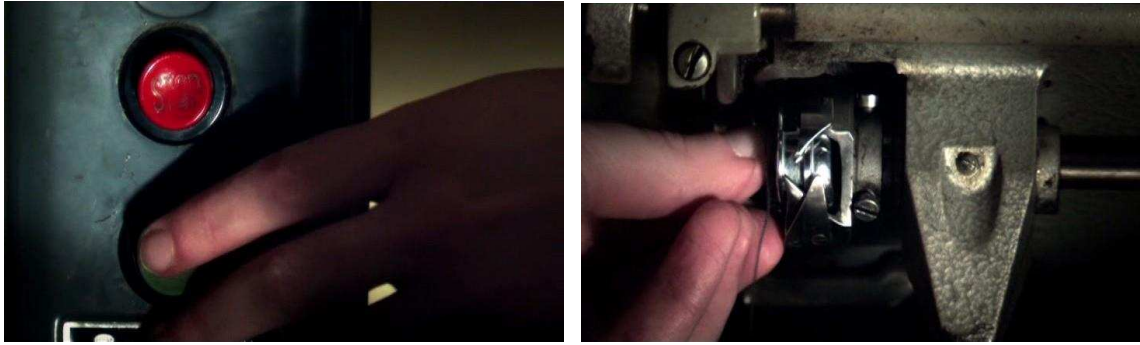


Fig. iv. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

the performer in one frame;

- the audience's gaze being disrupted by the performer's gaze;
- the fast-paced edits' disruption of the narrative content; the different motifs (such as sewing) that represent the feminine;
- the active engagement of the performer in making (a leather harness) whilst regarding herself in the monitor screen as a potential disruption of the feminine's usual relation to a mirror.

Through the video I explore how the (male) gaze of an audience might be subverted by introducing fragmentation as a potentially disruptive method of viewing a representation of the feminine. Through this method I propose an alternative experience of a representation of the feminine. Fragmentation is composed through the medium of video and narrative sequencing in an attempt to allegorically reference the feminine as a process of loss. Further in the thesis I continue to explore, through my plans for *(f)low visibility*, various ways in which fragmentation (of the representation of the feminine) might be used to disrupt the unification of the (male) gaze in an audience's reception.

The video is informed by Virginia Woolf's text *A Room of One's Own*; where Woolf argues for woman's right to independently possess her own room and to have the means to own property so as to develop her subjectivity independently from men.¹⁷⁶ The video also responds to this issue in relation to Eva Hesse's studio arts practice through questioning what constitutes a finished

¹⁷⁶ Woolf, V. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Penguin Classics, (2002).



Fig. v. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

artwork in the context of a *woman* making an artwork as a way to ontologically parallel this process with woman attempting to structure her own subjectivity.¹⁷⁷

Taking into account woman as a perpetual process of *becoming*, the video performs and maps a woman making an artwork in different ways: sewing a leather harness and making the video in her own room. In an attempt to reference the feminine negative through the set design, the video is composed of different feminine motifs and through fragmented viewing perspectives constituted by the video/surveillance apparatus of the only character in the video: a woman. I unpack this by questioning:

- who/what is seeing who/what?
- and who possesses who's subjectivity?

I analyse the construction of the (male) gaze through Jacqueline Rose's feminist critique of Lacan's phallogocentric structuration of vision, where Rose applies his theory to cinematic experience. I question, through the analysis of the video I made, whether it is possible for woman to look into a different kind of mirror: surveillance apparatus, to see herself seeing herself seeing. This line of questioning attempts to depart from man's construction of woman as a narcissistic process of self-seeing, 'the myth of Narcissus being especially apt to delineate that moment in which an apparent reciprocity reveals itself as no more

¹⁷⁷ The video was made in collaboration with Subjectivity and Feminisms research group in response to a retrospective of Eva Hesse's studio arts practice at the Camden Arts Centre, as part of an event screening video artworks that responded to Hesse's artwork at the Camden Arts Centre. <http://www.camdenartscentre.org/exhibitions/?id=100746> (accessed: 07/02/11).



Fig. vi. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

than the return of an image to itself'.¹⁷⁸ I think that this point made by Rose elaborates that when he gazes at woman she replicates and mirrors him, because his desire is a desire to see himself like Narcissus.

I also analyse the video's fragmented (narrative/image) construction through Peggy Phelan's notion of the *unmarked*. According to Phelan, the medium of video expresses how performance is temporally marked by loss, thus privileging performance and video as ways to discuss how feminine subjectivity is also marked by losses. Phelan situates the unmarked as what is subject to disappearances in performance art through the processes of the feminine negative.¹⁷⁹ My analysis of the (male) gaze, however, makes a clear distinction between the position of the (male) gaze in performance and in video, as these two different forms involve different kinds of reception by an audience. Since video is subject to editing there is a radically different set of possibilities for the production of the image of the feminine when compared to performance. Post-production montage of video plays a crucial role in temporal and spatial dispossession and fragmentation of the (male) gaze, adding to the fragmentations that might occur in the set-up of a scene in terms of the relation between a performer and the contents of a scene. These approaches, to video and performance, are intertwined in *A Room of One's Own*. I maintain that the process of referencing the feminine in the video is an attempt at deliberately performing the hysteric. Reflecting on Irigaray's theorising, in which she

¹⁷⁸ Rose, J. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, (1986), p.170.

¹⁷⁹ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006), p. 115.

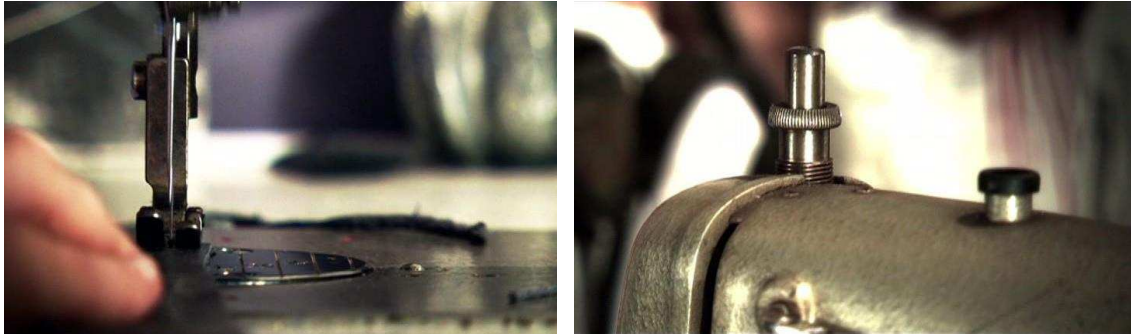


Fig. vii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

proposes that the hysteric process could arise differently by actively performing the feminine, and that through disruptive gestural attempts to speak the feminine, masculine language might be deformed. She proposes that this hysterical process could afford feminised meanings and the potential disruption of (the symbolic) phallogocentric discourse.¹⁸⁰

In order to build on my proposal for the possibility of my artworks composing images which are perceived in a feminised register, *Diagram 1* is problematised through the video artwork in this section, in terms of the camera/audience position as voyeurs and the on-screen image as a display for their desiring (male) gaze. *A Room of One's Own* (video) offers an alternative approach to these relations in *Diagram 1* as it is composed through two cameras (rather than one perspective).

Analysis of *Video: A Room of One's Own*

The video *A Room of One's Own* begins with a hand switching on a sewing machine, followed by a shot of a hand adjusting a surveillance camera. A distorted glimpse of a woman's face is partially visible when the hand is

¹⁸⁰ 'Hysteria: it speaks in the mode of a paralyzed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also a forbidden speech... it speaks as symptoms of an "it can't speak to or about itself"... And the drama of hysteria is that it is inserted schizotically between that gestural system, that desire paralyzed and enclosed within its body [...] both mutism and mimicry are then left to hysteria. Hysteria is silent and at the same time it mimes. And – how could it be otherwise – miming/reproducing a language that is not its own, masculine language, it caricatures and deforms that language.' Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 136-137.



Fig. viii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

removed from the camera. From this moment on, the only character in the video, a woman, is videoed without her face in the shot, as she refuses to return the (male) gaze of the camera person videoing her and the anticipated spectators of the final video. The woman in the video adjusts the surveillance camera to acknowledge that she is the one directing the desiring look of the camera (this perspective remains unaltered from thereon). This image is displayed live on a black and white surveillance monitor. There are close-ups of her hands sewing and cutting leather, emphasising a tactile relation to her image. Only her body and the process of making the leather harness are revealed in the image. Her identity is never fully disclosed. A proposed feminised cartography is mapped through the video's narrative composition between a sewing machine, a woman's body, the making of a leather harness, and the different cameras' and screens' perspectives. The cameras divide the position of watching in the video between two perspectives:

- The surveillance camera and monitor image: represent her desire to look at herself through a deferred mirror, a mirror which is not directly in front of her (as the camera is situated behind her and its live-feed is shown on a monitor in front of her).
- The colour video camera: is held by a camera man who directs the camera's gaze. The camera records the scene from different angles and often captures the black and white monitor in the scene, both at a distance



Fig. ix. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

and close-up. The monitor's image at times occupies the whole frame in the final video.

Considering this preliminary analysis of the final video, I expect that the audience's gaze could be divided, or rather, the process of watching could be bifurcated between the two different cameras and between the two different screens (the monitor screen and the surface of the video image). There are therefore, a number of different viewing positions involved in the artwork that could disrupt the process of the (male) gaze, for example:

- the performer in the video directs and watches an image of herself on a monitor screen;
- the camera person observes and records the performer watching herself;
- the video is edited by the artist;
- the spectators observe the final video.

The monitor's screen is positioned so that the performer can watch the black and white image of herself unfold in real-time whilst she is sewing. The relation between the performer and the monitor's screen seems to represent the moment which Lacan counters: '*I see myself seeing myself*'.¹⁸¹ The performer (indirectly) watches herself in the monitor as she sews and cuts the leather, as though watching her actual hands constructing the harness and at the same time watching the virtual image displayed on the monitor's screen showing her

¹⁸¹ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998), p.80.

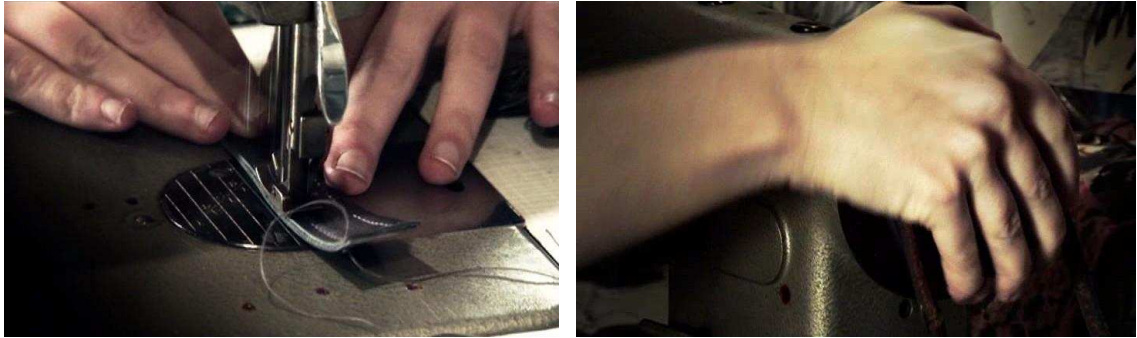


Fig. x. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

making the harness.¹⁸² Observing herself in these two different ways the performer could be interpreted as simultaneously occupying the position of exhibitionist and voyeur in the video.

This interpretation of the performer's relationship to the imaging apparatus seems to suggest that the (male) gaze of the apparatus/audience can be subverted. However, proposing that she desires herself in an 'alternate' mirror is problematic because this is the traditional role of the (male) narcissist. And to propose that parts of her body are fragmented, and indeed, emphasised whilst other parts are absented is also problematic as this seems to propose a fetishistic approach to her encounter with herself. How, then, might a feminised process of fragmentation subvert a voyeuristic, narcissistic, fetishistic encounter with her image? How can the feminine be experienced in an artwork when the process of gazing already figures the feminine as a lacking body? According to Lacan the voyeur does not seek to see the phallus but to see the 'object as absence', and moreover, the *lack* of a phallus.¹⁸³ Lacan proposes that the phallus is projected onto the female body, her whole body is a phallus, meaning that the female/feminine is imaged and dominated by the phallocentric gaze. In Rose's analysis of a film, she describes this as 'the way in which the written discourse across the body of the woman can be seen as a masquerade

¹⁸² This can be seen in the video *A Room of One's Own* - Appendix 1 - in the shots which show the woman's hands in the foreground pulling the leather through the sewing machine and the black and white monitor displaying her image in the background of the shot.)

¹⁸³ Ibid. p.182.

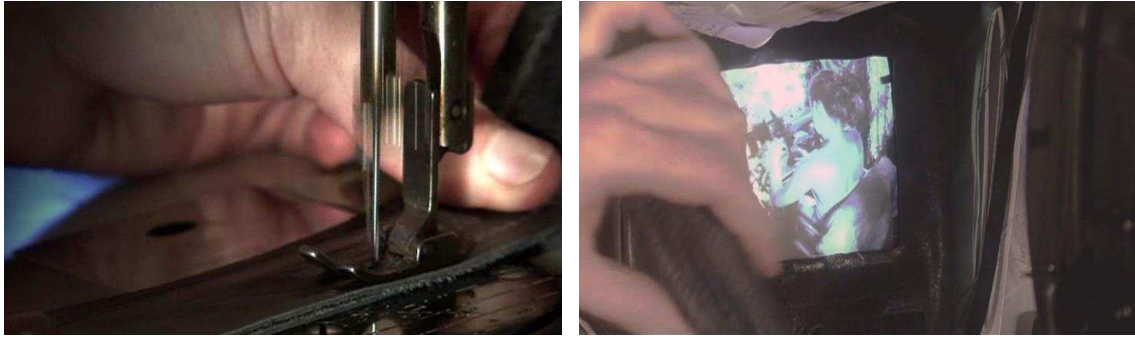


Fig. xi. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

or the embodiment of a master discourse'.¹⁸⁴

To expand on the issue of narcissism and fetishism I reflect briefly on Sartre's description of the situation of the look (that Lacan reinterprets) in which there is a man watching through a keyhole. A man comes across another man peering through the keyhole; it is through the shame of being found out by the other's gaze that the one watching through the keyhole is apprehended by the gaze of the one that comes across him, presuming that the voyeur consequently sees. It is only through the intervention of the other that the gaze is realised by the voyeur and that he comes into subjectivity. As Lacan comments, 'the gaze I encounter—you can find this in Sartre's own writing—is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other'.¹⁸⁵ According to Sartre, to be captured by another's gaze is to realise one's own gaze, to become conscious of one's own gaze, is to see as one imagines oneself being seen in the field of the other's gaze.

The subject is not just caught by the look which subjects it and cancels it's position as 'pure' observation; it is caught by a look which it cannot see but which it imagines in the field of the Other; and it is literally caught in the act, which is not an act, that is, in its role as *voyeur* or support of desire.¹⁸⁶

Perhaps the performer in the video occupies two positions in this relation outlined by Sartre. She represents the fantasy of woman (exhibitionist) observed through the keyhole by the voyeur, that is to say, her image is observed on the

¹⁸⁴ Rose, J. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, (1986), p.201.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p.84.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p.193.



Fig. xii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

monitor screen by her (the performer), the camera person observes and records her, and the spectator of the final video observes her observing herself in the video. Perhaps the performer acknowledges her desire to be seen and to see herself in the monitor differently? The way in which she situates the surveillance camera at a distance from her body could be interpreted as a process of dislocating her eye from the camera lens, as she does not peer directly through the camera (keyhole) to maintain her perspective. Furthermore, the surveillance camera could be interpreted as substituting her look. However, by situating the performer's primary identification with the surveillance camera this structure dangerously echoes patriarchal discourse, as 'this is the fantasy of the all-perceiving subject (subject and the centre of look) which is thus seen to be inscribed within the very apparatus of cinema itself'.¹⁸⁷

The performer watches the image of her back displayed on the monitor in front of her. She observes herself as though she is sat behind herself. The monitor is also captured by the surveillance camera, resulting in an image (of her watching herself) being infinitely replicated on-screen. Perhaps this reinforces the situation of the camera as occupying the centre of the (desiring) look because of the relation between the eye and the lens?

I could also claim though, that she is the voyeur. She does not see a *mirror* image of herself in the monitor, but an image of herself from behind. As a

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 195.

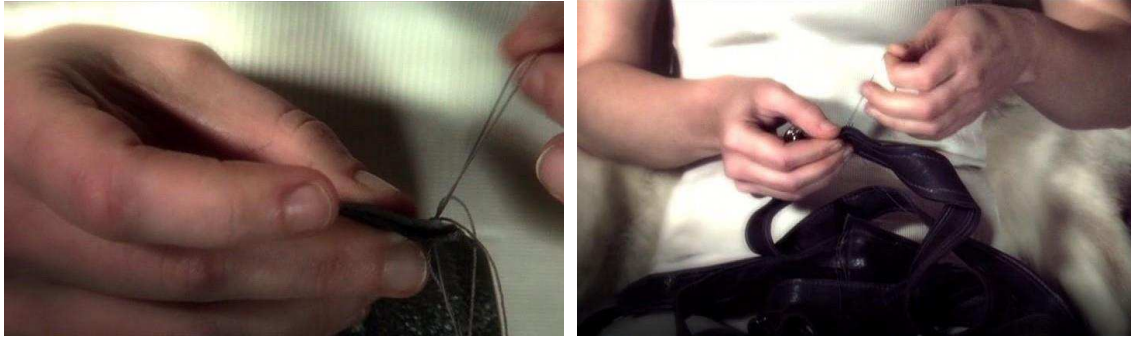


Fig. xiii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

consequence of the image's orientation she others herself, because of the camera/eye behind her head, as proposed by Rose,

The relationship of the scopic drive to the object of desire is not simply one of distance but of externalisation, which means that the observing subject can become the object of the look, and hence elided as subject of its own representation (the œil derrière la tête) [eye behind the head] could therefore be the means whereby the subject's position as spectator in the cinema is continually threatened.¹⁸⁸

Here Rose refers to Lacan's description of how, whilst out fishing, he notices a sardine can, though he does not see it per se, because the metal surface of the can reflects a glaring light. Lacan explains that this is the look of the object that reduces the observer (of the object) into an object, because it looks back (though the object does not see). I think that the threat of the performer's capture by the gaze of the camera person is subverted in the final video's narrative configuration (as opposed to the structure of film in cinematic experience), because the performer makes the gaze of the surveillance camera her own. Furthermore, the image she observes on-screen is not only live, but also of her, rather than of a narrative constructed elsewhere, as the monitor displays the unfolding scene in which she is immersed. Perhaps, though, the surveillance camera cannot be seen to have the same elevated status as a camera has in a spectator's cinematic experience. In *A Room of One's Own* the performer affects the surveillance camera's production of the image displayed on the monitor, which might be seen to interrupt and destabilise the narrative

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p.196.

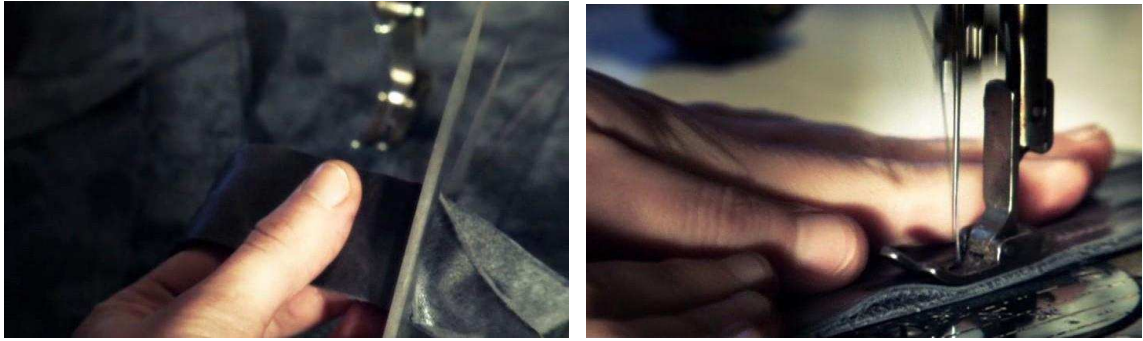


Fig. xiv. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

construction of the final video and to potentially disrupt the spectators' identification with the camera. I am proposing that the eye of the audience and the lens' of the cameras are displaced. I think that this displacement occurs in the narrative construction of the scene in the video and in the spectator's reception of the final video, through the shifting of perspectives and the doubling of the image of the same woman in one frame; making it difficult to centre the audience's look from one continuous perspective. In the audience's usual cinematic experience of a film the spectator identifies with the monocular vision of the camera (as a process of phallic vision which orders their (male) gaze from a singular perspective).

Perhaps though, monocular vision is actually being enforced in the final video of *A Room of One's Own*. Although in the making of the scene, the surveillance camera's and the camera person's capture are maintained as distinctly different perspectives, in the final video the image represented on the monitor screen is captured by the colour camera which composes a unified perspective for the viewer.

Alternatively, perhaps, it is only her desiring gaze for herself which is maintained as a continuous look on the monitor's screen, which risks shoring up her situation in the video as exhibitionist. However, she potentially disrupts her image's continuity because she refuses to return the gaze of the surveillance camera and, indeed, of the camera person and the audience. By refuting the



Fig. xv. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

colour camera's look I think that she maintains her position through a process of disrupting the (male) look/gaze and the camera's unifying perspective.

However, what is at stake is not only the dislocation of the eye/lens of the cameras in the video, but also the status of the images produced in the final video. I think that she is potentially elided in this relation, because the centre of the look is maintained and occupied by the camera person recording the overall scene, constructing her as absence par excellence. Furthermore, perhaps in this relation the performer in the final video is the *screen*.¹⁸⁹ Lacan explains that a *screen* would need to be interposed between the viewer and the object in order for the light emitted from the object (e.g. the sardine can) to be obscured, so that the object might be seen. According to Lacan, this de-centres the subject in vision as the subject is always unsure about what is seen. The *screen* not only reveals the object of observation but also obscures it (and as a consequence it looks back reducing the spectator to *object*).¹⁹⁰ Perhaps the deferred, altered reflection of her displayed on the monitor and her relation to her image might compose the feminine as the site of the screen, interposed between what is revealed and obscured in the scene and potentially reduce her to an object. What is at stake if the performer is the screen? How does this figure her in terms of sexuate difference through the relation between the voyeur, exhibitionist and the stranger? Lacan says:

¹⁸⁹ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998), p. 97.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 96. Also see: Rose, J. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, (1986), p.192.

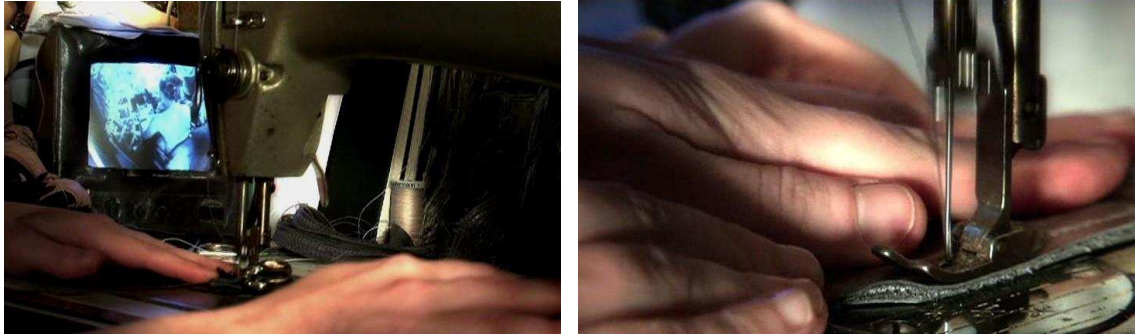


Fig. xvi. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

The gaze is this object lost and suddenly refound in the conflation of shame, by the introduction of the other. Up to that point, what is the subject trying to see? What he is trying to see, make no mistake, is the object as absence. What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind a curtain. There he will fantasize any magic of presence, the most graceful of girls, for example, even if on the other side there is only a hairy athlete.¹⁹¹

What is unnerving about Lacan's explanation is that the voyeur is always male and that the object of desire sought is the fantasy of *graceful girls*. In this explanation she is reduced to the characteristics of a child. She is a fantasy before she is even made manifest, before she exists in terms of her own desire and before she is indeed *seen*. In Lacan's story, man's desire does not depend on whether she is seen through the keyhole, but on the hidden gaze – on what cannot be grasped in the gaze. It is not important what is *behind the curtain* so long as the actuality remains hidden from his gaze, his desire can be maintained and sustained by the lure of the fantasy of (woman in) the scene. I think that through this phalloculocentric structure a woman cannot manifest her own position of desire in the visible, because the visible must always lead back to his perspective whether he is subject or object. In either case, he is always the centre of his look or of the look of the object (the *gaze* is *male* whether or not it is a man or a woman looking).

The other must therefore serve to mirror the one, reduplicating what man is assumed to know already as the place of (his) production. "She" must be only the

¹⁹¹ Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998), p.182.

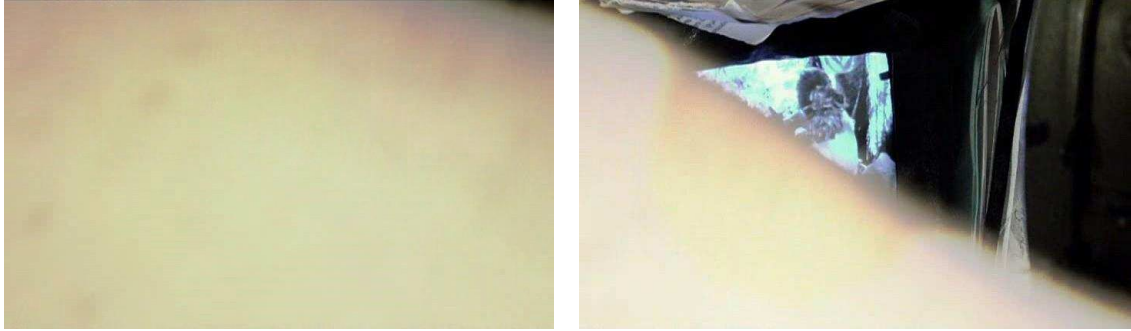


Fig. xvii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

path, the method, the theory, the *mirror*, which leads back, by process of repetition, to the recognition of (his) origin for the "subject".¹⁹²

Occupying the site of the screen, moreover, the curtain, the veil perhaps the performer in the video is screened by the look of the camera person and therefore by the audience's too; that is to say, in the reception of the image the audience might project the '*given-to-be-seen*' onto her because of what they (structured by the male gaze) expect to encounter in the visible, that being the male fantasy of her irrespective of whether she is there or not.¹⁹³ I think that Lacan maintains that he (the male) is the only one that can ever take-up the position of looking, albeit a position which for him is constantly under threat.¹⁹⁴

The voyeur is not, therefore, in a position of pure manipulation of an object, albeit distant, but is always threatened by the potential exteriorisation of his own function. That function is challenged three times over: first, by the fact that the subject cannot see what it wants to see (it is this which becomes the conditioning factor of voyeurism which deliberately distances its object); secondly, by the fact that it is not the only one looking; thirdly, that the reciprocity implied in this is immediately challenged, since the subject can never [see] its look from the point at which the other is looking at it.¹⁹⁵

Thus far in this section my proposition to fragment the spectator's viewing position through splitting the perspectives between the surveillance camera's

¹⁹² Irigaray L, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 239.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* p.74.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 102 'It is a question rather of the relation to the phallus, in as much as it is lacking in the real that might be attained in the sexual goal. It is in as much as, at the heart of the experience of the unconscious, we are dealing with that organ—determined in the subject by the inadequacy organized in the castration complex—that we can grasp to what extent the eye is caught up in a similar dialectic. From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but on the contrary, a lure'.

¹⁹⁵ Rose, J. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, (1986), p.193.



Fig. xviii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

and the video camera's observation of the woman in the final video of *A Room of One's Own* has perhaps been unsuccessful. My aim in the thesis is to explore further the disruption of the unification of the image through the camera's and the audience's desiring gaze, in order to prevent the audience's look from reducing a representation of the feminine to a set of objects in their field of vision. This returns my enquiry to *Diagram 1*'s problematic proposition, which concerns whether the power of the look could be mediated given that the one who is looked at can never see from the point at which the other looks at them (as Sartre and Lacan theorise that in the field of the other's vision, the look/gaze reduces the one that is observed to objects under the observers gaze). Reflecting on *Diagram 1*, perhaps if a similar process could be put into effect in an audience's and the participants' relation to the apparatus – a process in which the relation between the eye and the lens might be displaced, then perhaps their reception of an image that references the feminine might be fragmented and prevented from reducing her to a set of objects/images. The problem of woman's structuration in the *A Room of One's Own* video concerns the position of the one who is observed as incapable of seeing from the position of the other who sees them. Irigaray opposes this standpoint (in Sartre's and Lacan's determination) of the *gaze*, whereby woman is always a fantasy of his desire, his image/object. Irigaray states that the *Universal*, as the *Same*, needs to be deconstructed because to see and to speak requires the recognition of sexuate difference to encounter the other evenly in the visible and in language.

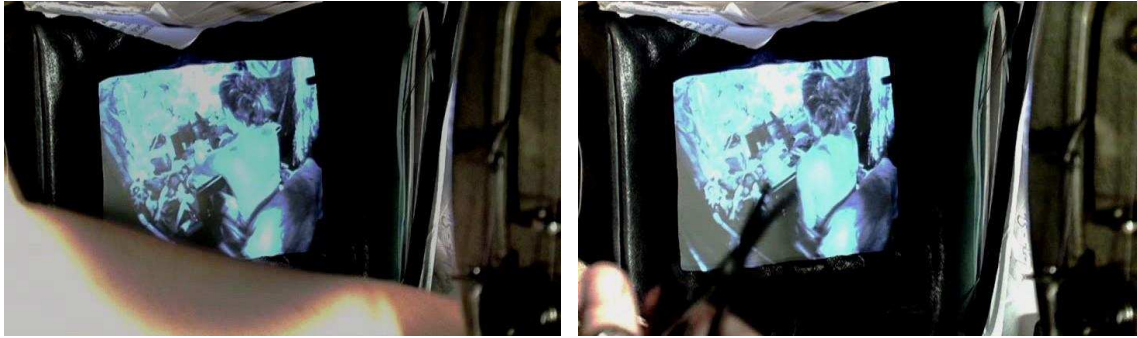


Fig. xix. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

Or might it happen that they see each other's eyes? Another possibility which is unlikely. For this to come about, it would have to happen that two *seers* assimilated the "universal Word," its effects, the world, in exactly the same way, and that they found each other at the same point in space and time. [...] Which makes us identical at a given moment.¹⁹⁶

Irigaray situates man as having the capacity to retain and mediate the look, as he is the proper receiver of the look. Countering this, she maintains that the body from which the look departs cannot see itself. Irigaray proposes that it is possible to distinguish the situation of the observer by sexually differentiating them, as observing the other concerns seeing, interrelating with the other with respect to their difference and not in terms of their sameness. 'Also as a phenomenon of visibility, given that without realising it, the other detains my look as it sees him, and that he sees that which I cannot see of myself'.¹⁹⁷ Irigaray acknowledges that one cannot see from the position of the other, but she maintains that this is equally the case for both man and woman. This means that feminine perception requires a different sense of space and time to masculine space and time.

I think that perhaps it is not a case of apprehending the hidden gaze, as pointed to by Lacan. I argue instead that the feminine (negative) participates in the loss of what can be seen, namely, what escapes the gaze and not what is hidden from it or lacking in the viewing/visible field because of her subjectivities' spatial and temporal difference.

¹⁹⁶ Irigaray L, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, London: Continuum, (2004), p. 151.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 142.



Fig. xx. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

Fragmentation

Perhaps Lacan's structuration of the (male) gaze is disrupted in the video *A Room of One's Own* even though the colour video camera is directed by the camera man's desiring gaze. Because another process of fragmentation occurs through the relation between the various motifs represented in the video which might be understood as representing woman's coded signifiers: the sewing machine, sewing clothing, cutting fabric, fur, woman's body in underwear, and watching herself in another kind of mirror (on the monitor screen). Together, these symbolically represent the feminine par excellence. These feminine motifs seem like facile facsimiles of what, supposedly, stereotypically composes feminine subjectivity. However, these feminine conventions are challenged because the feminine is parodied and *performed* in the video. I think that by deliberately performing the feminine masquerade the final video acknowledges that the construction of the feminine negative under the demise of the (male) gaze can arise as a hysterical attempt at speaking and gesturing the feminine through fragmented feminised references.

Perhaps the performer's body is not devised or displayed as a site of contemplation because she is deliberately active in the video. I propose that her activities actively trouble her usually passive representation, for example: her hands are sewing and cutting, the sewing machine parts are perpetually moving, and the process of constructing the harness is continually returned to in



Fig. xxi. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

the diegesis. These active processes are fragmented through the montage of the video, with close-ups that do not give an overview of the whole scene but rather present the scene from various perspectives, often in the same frame. I think that the fragmented representations of the feminine in the video potentially shatter his mirror as she does not continually reflect his desire but rather her desire actively drives the fragmentation of the image. I interpret this process as her potential capacity to disrupt the continuity of her image under the (male) gaze. As a result I propose that a phalloculocentric reading of her image might not be possible. However, I think that in spite of her potentially illegible image, her image could still make meaning. How can she still be identifiable as a fragmented mirror that productively disrupts and emerges as a referent in the on-screen image? I think that the disruptions of her image in the visible constitute the feminine through negation, through blanks in the visible which interrupt her image in the visible. In *A Room of One's Own* video her image could be accessed as a necessarily feminine process of imaging as it does not cohere under the (male) gaze, but rather fragments its order.

For the sex of woman is not one. And, as jouissance bursts out in each of these/her "parts," so all of them can mirror her in dazzling multifaceted difference. Is she therein more complete than in the whole? If so, it would mean that this protean pleasure can be broken down into shards, pieces of a mirror.¹⁹⁸

The construction of the feminine under the (male) gaze is also potentially subverted by the fast edits between various perspectives, as this process could

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 239.

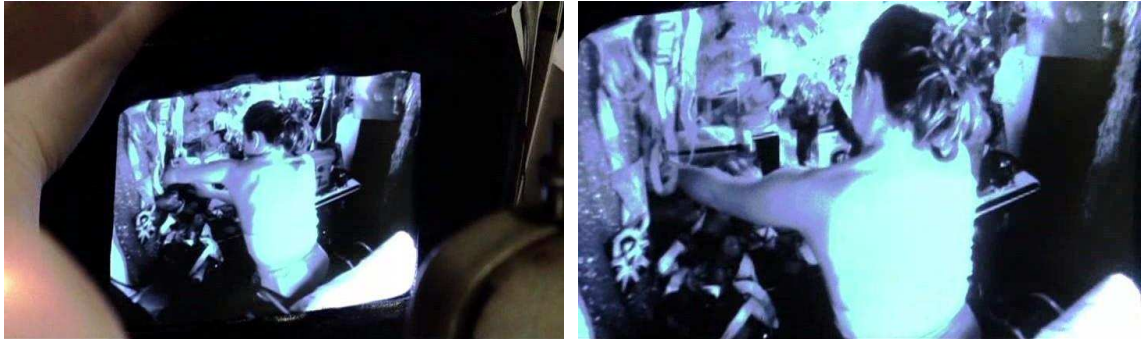


Fig. xxii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

be seen to fragment the composition of the feminine and the narrative construction of the video, whereby the video cannot 'maintain a unified visual surface' in an audiences' reception.¹⁹⁹

The video does not represent sewing as a delicate craft. Sewing is portrayed as an aggressive, violent and unsettling process, through close-ups of sharp tools that cut and puncture leather and the fast paced edits. In this way *A Room of One's Own's* thematic draws on and is informed by Martha Rosler's performance video *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975). Rosler portrays cooking as an aggressive and dangerous act through a semiotic framework; she decodes the feminised language of cooking. Rosler says: 'I was concerned with something like the notion of 'language speaking the subject,' and with the transformation of the woman herself into a sign in a system of signs that represent a system of food production, a system of harnessed subjectivity'.²⁰⁰

Rosler interrogates the cultural signifiers that shape and designate the domestic role of women; she challenges this role by deliberately enacting it and alters its usual passive representation through performing the role aggressively.²⁰¹ I think that Rosler re-appropriates the signification of cooking as an active feminised process. This occurs through her performance and the narrative composition of the video, which consists of naming kitchen utensils in

¹⁹⁹ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006) p. 73.

²⁰⁰ <http://artforum.com/video/mode=large&id=26085> (accessed: 03/02/11).

²⁰¹ Ravenal J.B. *Outer & Inner Space*, Pipilotti Rist, Shirin Neshat, Jane & Louise Wilson, and the History of Video Art. Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, (2002) p. 47.

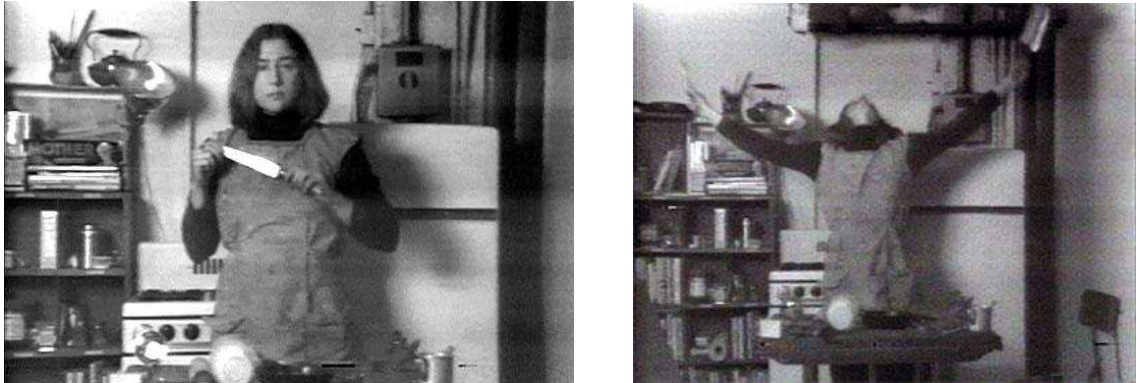


Fig. xxiii. Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (Video Stills x2), 1975

alphabetical order and miming their function in a deliberately parodic way. Through this process of performance she disrupts the viewer's reading and redirects their interpretation of women in a kitchen. I propose that thwarting these conventions through violent repetitious actions that perform the function of each object with hysterical intent might deform an audience's usual associations of passivity with these activities, intentions, and meanings in a domestic scene. By articulating the names of kitchen utensils she declares and performs their altered function, drawing the viewer into a disruptive and unsettling representation of woman. In this way Rosler challenges the coherence of the symbolic construction of woman through utterances and gestures. Rosler's video seems to cut through the traditional rubric of woman in the kitchen by disrupting the phallogocentric representation of the feminine. Though the systematised process seems to subvert the linguistic relation to objects and relations to woman, her representation is still received through a supposedly coherent discourse. The categorical method of the narratives imperative is represented through the linear progression of the alphabet which seems to lock the objects (albeit with differently inflected meanings composed through gestures) in the semiotic structure of coherence. Whereby the enactment of hysterical gestures temporarily fasten their disruptive actions to names/objects/subjectivity determined by the dominant paradigm's system of representation and deform the phallogocentric order of language/image of the



Fig. xxiv. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

feminine. However the disruption of the feminine seems to be contained by and restricted to the dominant paradigm's construction of the semiotic/symbolic. The video maintains the logic of coherence/incoherence in a circuitous semiotic system of representation (as the alphabet has a definitive end). Though I am attempting to find a way to disrupt the continuity of the gaze and the symbolic (language) of the dominant male paradigm I propose that this process might be enacted by way of moving beyond his system of representation, that is beyond the semiotic. So that the feminine is not simply represented as an incoherent subjectivity within the constraints of his system of representation that appears to momentarily break-up the continuity of his semiotic framework. The feminine cannot simply be that which interrupts the master discourse or that which inserts herself into it at irregular intervals. Because besides disrupting his text my aim is, through the composition of the artworks, to compose a generative form of feminised meaning which might be experienced (within and) beyond a symbolic register, that is outside a binarised relation; so that the feminine might be represented in relation to her own subjectivities' specificity.

Sewing, like cooking, and the process of performing the feminine, as demonstrated in Rosler's performance, is a repetitious process; hence repetition is constant throughout the video, *A Room of One's Own*. The video narrative is structured through repetition as a reiterative act. Various processes of repetition perform a process of feminised miming in an attempt to fragment the narrative composition of the feminine under the (male) gaze:

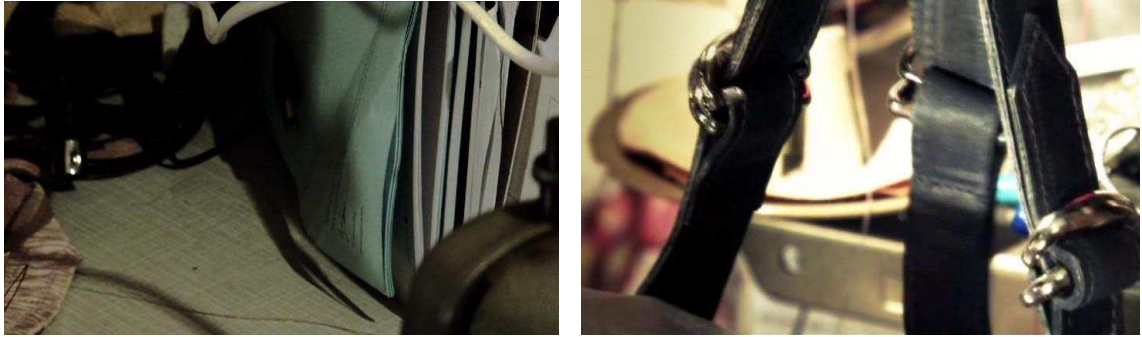


Fig. xxv. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

- different mechanisms on the sewing machine move up and down,
- the sound of the machine motor continually rumbles,
- cigarettes mount in the ashtray,
- the performer's hands pull the leather back and forth through the sewing machine,
- and shots of isolated parts of the sewing machine and the performer's body are repeated throughout the video.

I think that due to the video's structuration the feminine is spatially fragmented through its narrative and image composition. In this sense, the leading feminine role is dispossessed as the feminine par excellence. She can only emerge in the fragments, between the clipped shots of the video as a 'parable of loss'.²⁰² The feminine cannot be a fixed subjectivity (like man) because she always functions from the prerequisite/default position of loss. The motifs of the feminine in the video do not construct a unified version of her character. Due to the fragmented relation between the different objects which compose the scene in *A Room of One's Own* she cannot be maintained as a continuous subjectivity under the gaze. I think that the lack of unity in the visual surface of the video, means that she cannot be possessed as image by the (male) gaze. Perhaps through this process of dispossession the feminine is not constructed in the video through the phalloculocentric discourse of

²⁰² Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006) p. 74.

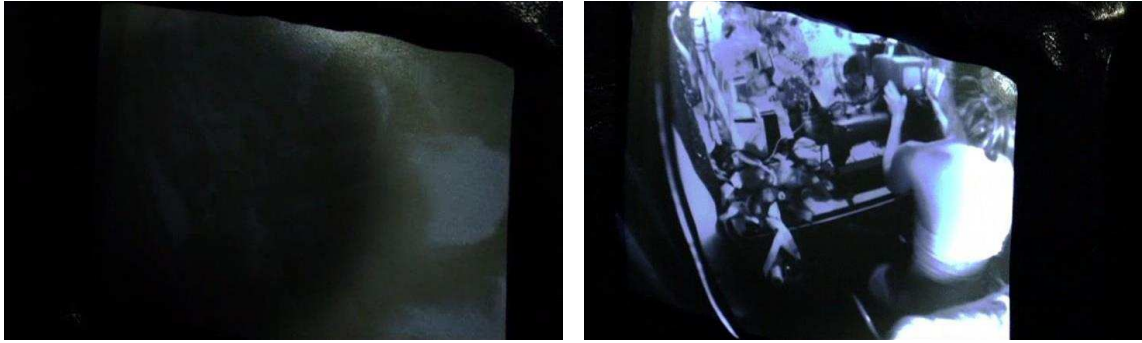


Fig. xxvi. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

ownership/possession.²⁰³ Rather, she might be understood as being constructed elsewhere, outside of that framework as a process of the feminine masquerade.²⁰⁴ For example, in Phelan's discussion of Sherman's artwork she analyses the process of miming the feminine:

Re-posing as the only form of responding. For women, all correspondence is a reply, including the initial letter.) In order to critique the imitative pose she enacted that pose and thereby reproduced it. As Craig Owens observes Sherman's work participates "in the very activity that is being denounced *precisely in order to denounce it*".²⁰⁵

The video attempts to address how the feminine is constructed as already absent. By this I mean that because the feminine is the masquerade, in order to deal with this absence, the video might be interpreted as being constructed through a disconnect between different perspectives which nevertheless absent her identity (e.g. her face is not visible). These different perspectives seem to repeatedly absent her, and yet paradoxically she is the leading role playing out her leading feminine role (in a feminised scene). Repeating the performance of the feminine masquerade, through the video montage, feminine motifs, and the act of watching the feminine, seems to mark the absence of the feminine.

²⁰³ Lacan claims that he counters the Cartesian structure of vision, which he says is figured as a process of possession of the observer's representations of the visible 'as soon as I perceive, my representations belong to me [...] including something that may have eluded you in passing, namely, this belongs to me aspect of representations, so reminiscent of property [...] reduce[s] the subject apprehended by the Cartesian meditation to a power of annihilation' Lacan, J. *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. London: Vintage, (1998) p. 81.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 88 – 89.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 64.



Fig. xxvii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

The video is composed of fragmented versions of the feminine/performer. This method of fragmentation attempts to acknowledge gaps in the visible which constitute the representation of the feminine in the negative. These gaps structure the fragmentation with specific regard to what Phelan calls 'the failure of the given to be seen to remain fixed in an arrested projection'.²⁰⁶ According to Phelan, there is always a process of disappearance (and mobility) in performance art; she ontologically correlates this with woman's subjectivity. In a way, the monitor in which the performer observes herself from behind her head marks the disappearance of her subjectivity, actively disrupting the conventions of the *given to be seen* in terms of its referent, the mirror. The black and white monitor marks the failure of the feminine to emerge to herself. As Phelan succinctly remarks, 'in the admission and recognition of one's failure to appear to oneself and within the representational field [...] the discontinuity engendered by the failure to appear sustains our dependence on visual representation as a mirror'.²⁰⁷

In this way I think that *A Room of One's Own* (video) attempts to represent the process of the feminine negative actively through the various motifs represented in the scene which reference the feminine. However, the feminine negative is only partially mobilised in the final video because the video fails to disrupt the relation between the camera lens and the audience's gaze.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 91.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

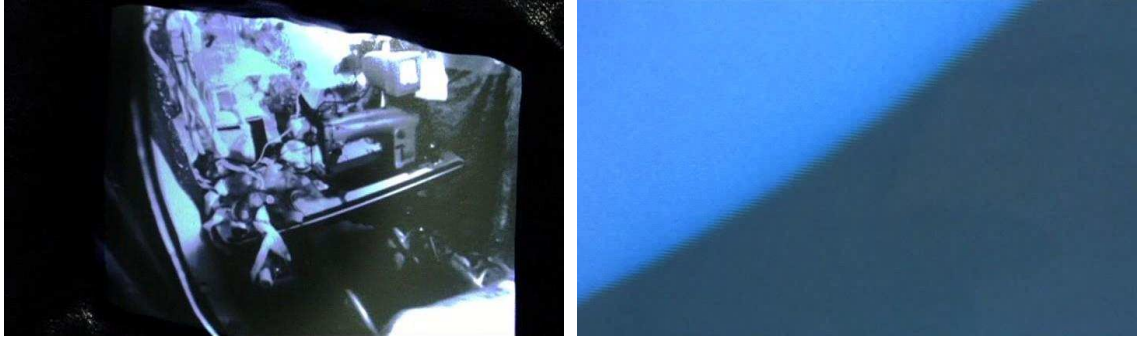


Fig. xxviii. *A Room of One's Own* (Video Stills x2)

In the next section, *Part 2* of the thesis, I explore processes of fragmentation of the camera's and audience's viewing positions and how to compose feminised images through a process of exchange and inter-relationality with an image.

Part 2: DIAGRAM 2

Diagram 2

In this section I question the uneven configuration of the gaze between the participants and the audience suggested by *Diagram 1*'s set-up. I attempt to subvert the reification of patriarchal vision in surveillance apparatus' production, reception and representation by redesigning *Diagram 1* as *Diagram 2*. I think that in *Diagram 1* the surveillance apparatus problematically seemed to occupy the position of invisible and all-powerful controller of the scene. The previous sections, *Surveillance Apparatus* and *A Room of One's Own*, concerned the structuration of visibility and invisibility of surveillance apparatus in relation to the figuration of woman in the visible under the (male) gaze. The camera in *Diagram 1* would not be visible to the audience and the screen would not be visible to the participants. *Diagram 1* therefore seems to shore-up and replicate surveillance apparatus' socio-cultural construction, in which it is situated as proper mediator (intervener and interlocutor) of the scene which captures actual representations of the visible. The audience's unequivocal stronghold over the power to look at the participant unevenly configures the gaze in *Diagram 1*, which risks ideologically structuring the installation through a phalloculocentric process of reception.

I think that the position of the camera in *Diagram 1* is perhaps analogous (to Sartre's scene and) to the Western Judeo-Christian hierarchical construction of the power of God and man/male as maintained through the patriarchal structure of the visible. I take issue with this structure because it serves as the proviso of *Sameness*, which does not allow for sexuate difference. Briefly, the reason why I am reflecting on God as an organising principle of malecentric constitution of the subject is because this structure precedes the subject, ordering the subject through the *law of the father*. The law of the father orders knowledge/desire/being: the original subject. According to Irigaray (in her analysis of Freud's theorising):

That said, it is his desire which, come what may, prescribes the force, the shape, the modes, etc., of the law he lays down or passes on, a law that reduces to the

state of “fantasy” the little girl’s seduced and rejected desire—a desire still faltering, barely articulate, silent perhaps, or expressed in signs or body language, a desire that must be seduced to the discourse of the law of the father.²⁰⁸

The task demanded of woman to reflect *His* image in his mirror is therefore a difficult one, which compounds her as a negative subject. *He* is omnipresent and invisible, meaning that it is difficult for her to reflect the fantasy of his desire because she must guess at what he wants to know/see, whilst her own subjectivity remains blank. ‘Thus I have become your image in this nothingness that I am, and you gaze upon mine in your absence of being’.²⁰⁹ By interpreting *Diagram 1* through Judeo-Christian logic (e.g. we are made in His image) I seem to be positioned as the all powerful invisible creator and image maker, determining my agency as the artist-god,²¹⁰ as the invisible designer of the installation. I could appear to intervene with the image on the laptop, to alter its rendition on-screen (the laptop: a mysterious black-box) in *Diagram 1*.

Diagram 1’s composition is ethically problematic. The moment between the participants entering the enclosed room and being in the enclosed room could become about their subjugation, their relinquishment of power to the apparatus’ phalloculocentric bent, and to my design. The participants run the risk of being objectified and the artwork could in turn simply recant a narcissistic/fetishistic structuration. *Diagram 1* seems to be structured through the notion of invisible patriarchal composers of the visible: surveillance and the law of the father. Surveillance apparatus’ socio-cultural construction could be seen to be allegorically God: omnipresent and invisible, yet all-seeing (omniscient), moreover, as an all-powerful (omnipotent) invisible eye that judges. Haraway determines this as the *God-trick* that underpins the structure of the visible and

²⁰⁸ Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 38.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 197.

²¹⁰ ‘Traditionally man claims to be the one who sees, the one who’s horizon would not be pierced from one end to the other both by his “own” vision and by the look of the other who sees him. This belief, this will for mastery, probably constitutes one of the most fundamental illusions of the flesh. The screen or armour that places an interdiction on loving relations. And the postulate of a God who is both invisible and who sees all, which makes up for the blind gaze of the other’. Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p.143.

language (the symbolic), in Haraway's words, 'the world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favour of a master decoder'.²¹¹

Surveillance apparatus' tendency to be structured through the (male) gaze needs to be curbed here in the thesis in order for visibility to be accessed through the register of the feminine. I do not, however, intend to eradicate visibility from sensible embodied perception. Rather, I think that visibility needs to be deformed in terms of its phalloculocentric structure with regard to its tendency to fix, to totalise vision, and the visible, as a privilege of male/masculine perspective. I am attempting to provide an alternative feminised experience for participant's/audience's reception by creating artworks which themselves destabilise accepted forms of knowledge in order to deform a phalloculocentric reception. The feminised experience I am proposing to provide attempts to subvert the fixity of the gaze so as to avoid spatially exteriorising it through *geometral perspective* (as suggested by Lacan) in participant's/audience's reception, towards interiorising perception through a feminine register, which I suggest might be afforded through touch. In Irigaray's theorising of the *tangible*, she counters the law of the father (God) as the precedent to the original subject. She proposes that touching affords an *enfleshed* (embodied) process of perception (predicated on interiority) on the side of the maternal-feminine in which the pre-nascent body's immersion (inside her body) in intrauterine touching might be thought of as the predicate to the subject's desire/knowledge/being:

Perhaps the visible needs the tangible but this need is not reciprocal? [...] But the two maps are incomplete and do not overlap: *the tangible is, and remains, primary in its opening*. Its touching on, of and by means of the other. The dereliction of its ever touching this first touching. Which is true of the visible. And which opens up the question of "God" but in a certain forgetfulness of the primary maternal-feminine. Which entails the fact that God is always entrusted to the look and never sufficiently imagined as tactile bliss? Who imagines the beyond as an infinitely blissful touching? Being touched by God, for example. Which is impossible to imagine insofar as God is the counterweight to immersion in intrauterine touching.

²¹¹ Haraway, D. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. London: Free Associations Books, (1991), p. 198. 'The only position from which objectivity could not possibly be practiced and honoured is the standpoint of the master, the Man, the One God, whose Eye produces, appropriates, and orders all difference. No one ever accused the God of Monotheism of objectivity, only of indifference. The god-trick is self-identical, and we have mistaken that for creativity and knowledge'. Ibid. p. 193.

Irigaray proposes that perception and the inter-relational encounter with an other is predicated on an interiorised process, rather than the exteriorising process of the (male) gaze. This criteria is important as a phalloculocentric gaze excludes the possibility of an inter-relational encounter, and exchange with an other, because of its propensity to capture the other in the field of the visible.²¹² The (male) gaze cannot encounter a sexually different other or exchange with a sexually different other equally. In Irigaray's words, this is due to the 'dehiscence of the seer in the visible and of the visible in the seer which is insurmountable between these two "signs": masculine and feminine, living signs that, as seer and visible, will never see each other'.²¹³ Irigaray proposes that masculine and feminine space and time are constructed and composed differently. Their sexual difference means that they can never see each other under the auspices of the (male) gaze because in this figuration *he* possesses the look and *she* is composed as image. Irigaray offers an alternative to the impossibility of looking from the position of the other by proposing that in order to exchange with the other, to encounter and communicate with the other from sexually different positions, requires a process of inter-relationality.

So perhaps it is not a question of who looks at who as proposed in *Diagram 1*, but rather of how a wider network of inter-relational exchanges might be afforded through the participants and audience meeting through the two open sites proposed in *Diagram 2*. I think that this could be possible in *Diagram 2* because it is predicated on a potential for inter-relationality of its contents, rather than on the organisation of one-sided-watching (as suggested in *Diagram 1*). I decided that the design of the enclosed room in *Diagram 1* needed to be developed by shifting the emphasis from one-sided-watching, as this propounded invisibility, to an exchange between visible sites, between the scaffolding-area containing props and the on-screen image. This shift in emphasis in the installation's design is proposed as this could provide the

²¹² I will argue further on in the thesis that perhaps it is the process of inter-relational encounter which is made possible in the installation of (f)low visibility in the nightclub.

²¹³ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p.140.

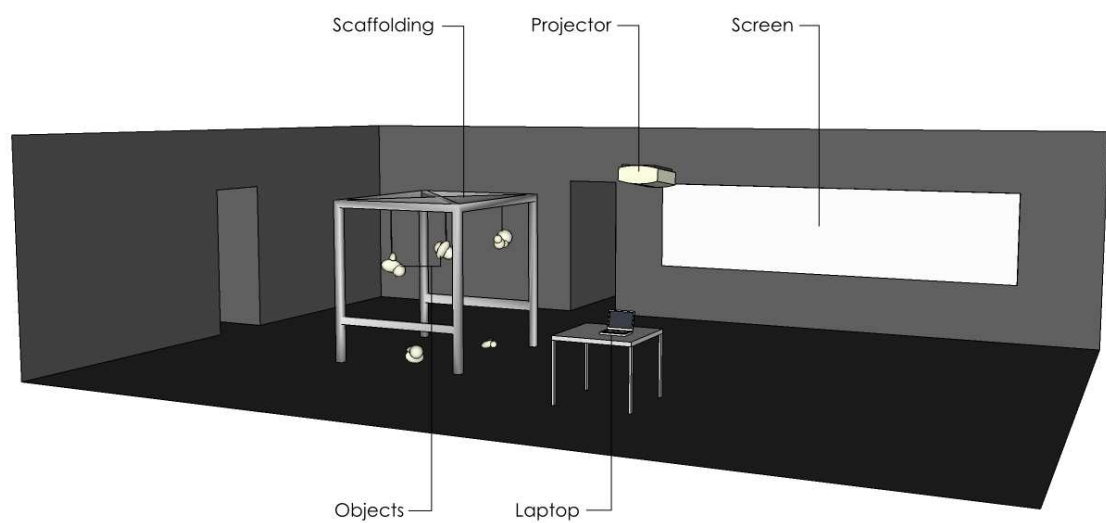


Fig. xxix. *Diagram 2* (orientation 1).

possibility for a feminised form of reception. Perhaps *Diagram 2*'s proposition for inter-relationality between the installation's contents (participants, audience, apparatus and props), through its delineation of the site where the props would be with scaffolding²¹⁴ instead of walls, could shift the participants'/audience's visual perceptual register to a tangible process of perception. *Diagram 2* is not based on designing the installation in terms of its spatial constituents per se, but, rather, rearranges the potential for relations between its contents.

I think that the contents of the installation in *Diagram 2* might be encountered equally in the visible by the participants and the audience. Perhaps in this figuration *Diagram 2* would not be ordered by the gaze, because neither the participants nor the audience would be able to hold the position of looking at the other without the other knowing that they are being looked at. Furthermore, by opening up the two sites of the installation *Diagram 2*'s set-up could de-centre the audience's look. Perhaps in this new relation the audience's gaze might continually shift between the sites. I imagine that in *Diagram 2* the audience's gaze would not be fixed to one image from a singular perspective, as no aspect of the installation would be concealed or only partially revealed. Potentially subverting the possibility of a one-sided-watching, *Diagram 2* could set-up even inter-relational exchanges between the installation's contents. I think that *Diagram 2* does not propose any area of the installation as a potential site of capture, for example: by the audience's and apparatus' gaze (as suggested by the structure of *Diagram 1*). If the space is open and visible in all aspects, how could this new configuration, in *Diagram 2*, set about the possibility of entering into my proposed form of feminised reception?

I thought that the props (which would represent female body parts) in *Diagram 2* could potentially be situated as markers that indicate the feminine, to compose the installation as an inter-relational network of feminised references; as a way to represent her in the negative. The inter-relational exchanges of participant interaction with the props and the on-screen image might emerge

²¹⁴ I chose to use scaffolding as it is a portable structure that denotes temporary architecture, which not only frames the space but also acknowledges that it is a temporary structure and spatial setting.

through a process of participants' touching and orientating the props. This process of interaction could aggregate a feminine lexicon through their interactions with the props in the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image. I imagine that the two sites' different representations of the maternal-feminine (virtual and actual) might simultaneously inform and drive participants' inter-relational exchanges (between these two sites), which could affect a feminised form of spatiality. Although the arrangement of the contents of the installation proposed in *Diagram 2*'s set-up might inform each other the contents would not be produced or received holistically by the participants and the audience, because the sites would be available to them respectively. This could mean that the participants and audience may encounter the installation in a fragmented way, which could subvert the possibility of a unified, capturing gaze (which in *Diagram 1* was ordered by the look of the camera). In *Diagram 2* the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image could potentially double the audience's point of interest, as they would not necessarily need to maintain their focus in one place, as the audience could perpetually shift their gaze between the two sites. The viewer might not have a point of focus in *Diagram 2*. The audience's potentially fragmented perception/reception and the participants' fragmented interaction shapes the basis for my claim for the possibility of a feminised form of spatiality in my thesis. I suggest that the inter-relational exchanges between the audience and the participants in the installation would be fragmented, which could in turn acknowledge the gaps in the reception of the image, which might in turn be shaped by the feminine negative. I think that these feminised gaps could be determined as a representation of her subjectivities' inevitable losses and absences. By opening the space in *Diagram 2* I imagine that the inter-relations of the contents of the installation could be multiplicitous. Therefore, I suggest that the participants' interactions and the audience's reception could be fragmented, because there would be a possibility for engaging with the installation in a variety of ways, e.g.:

- anyone in the audience could become a participant and vice versa,

- the audience could interact with participants and vice versa,
- the participants could interact with the screen and the props,
- the audience could encounter the participants interacting in the scaffolding-area and on-screen,
- the audience would be able to see the camera and could also potentially be captured by the camera.

Though visibility is at the forefront of *Diagram 2*'s design, this does not mean that the different interactive possibilities potentially afforded by opening up the space in the installation would be engaged with on a purely visual level. *Diagram 2* departs from *Diagram 1*'s economy of gazing. Proposing to open the space in *Diagram 2* aims to flatten the gaze's potential hierarchal relations in the artwork's reception.

By having two separate spaces, the enclosed room and a screen, *Diagram 1* was in danger of analogously illustrating the structure of the feminine masquerade through the tenure of the (male) gaze in the visual, in terms of the surveillance apparatus' capture, production and reception of the image. Moreover, *Diagram 1*'s inadequacy is clear in its proposition for the imaginary encounter between the participants and the on-screen image, which exemplifies *Diagram 1*'s potential to have perpetuated invisibilities – the woman as a fantasy image.

By opening up the two spaces in the design of *Diagram 2* the screen would not represent the site of capture per se, but would be an image which evenly and visibly unfolds in relation to all of the installation's contents. Though the camera would be relaying its capture from the scaffolding-area to the screen this operation would be available to the participants and could therefore give the participants agency in the production of the image on-screen. I think that the participants would also be able to respond to the image whilst it unfolds; perhaps they would be able to control how they would be seen by the audience in the scaffolding-area and on-screen, and how they might be imaged on-screen (e.g. perhaps they might walk out of the camera shot). I imagine that the

audience might enter into an identifiatory relation with the participants because the participants' activity would be available to them in the scaffolding-area and in the on-screen image. Furthermore, I imagine that the audience might identify with the participants because the audience would have the opportunity to take up the participants' position, as they would be able to participate.

Opening up the two spaces is driven by the inevitable inequality of exchanges that might have ensued between the different component parts of the installation in *Diagram 1* and the dualistic arrangement of the two alienated locations. Mobility rather than looking became central to re-thinking the process of encounter between the participants and apparatus. Determining the space of the installation, in *Diagram 2*, not necessarily with walls, but with a perceptible opening and sharing of the space of encounter²¹⁵ could further mobilise inter-relational exchanges between different aspects of the installation. *Diagram 2* might offer a greater variety of choices to participants, in terms of the ways in which participants may orientate themselves through the installation e.g.:

- the open space may change the ways in which participants move through the space;
- participants might enter/exit through any part of the installation;
- participants could have a greater variety of things to interact with;
- audience and participants could exchange roles throughout the event;
- participants might chose to exchange with an other (participant/audience) in the installation.

I think that *Diagram 2* could potentially significantly shift the audience's regard of the participants, which in *Diagram 1* was proposed as a voyeuristic enterprise. Rather than only viewing the participants in the on-screen image, as a simulated image or as an image reflecting an audience's desire, the audience would be able to encounter the participants in an actual sense in the scaffolding-area. Crucially the audience's relation to the participants would be altered further because I imagine that the audience would not necessarily focus on the

²¹⁵ Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008).

participants in the scaffolding-area or on the on-screen image. Rather, their inter-relational exchanges with the installation might be composed through shifting gazes between the screen and the scaffolding-area, meaning that the gaze of the audience could be fragmented, which could be aligned with a feminine spatial and perceptual approach to the relations between things (i.e.: the installations contents) as a process of movement.

Vision is effectively a sense that can totalize, enclose, in its own way. More than the other senses, it is likely to construct a landscape, a horizon. Up to a certain point. It happens that movement is a more adequate way of building myself an aesthesiological body. And that, moving through the world, across the universe, or dancing, I construct more of a dwelling for myself than through vision.²¹⁶

I think that movement/interaction could alter the (male) gaze's exteriorised spatial construction of vision and project of capture. Movement actions the spatial not only as an exteriorised geometrically ordered visible world, which occurs outside of the body in a phalloculocentric framework; but also as a process of interiority which occurs at a feminine corporeal (embodied) level. In my interpretation of Irigaray's conception of the enfleshed, the body not only moves through space but also moves at the level of the flesh.²¹⁷ The body is composed through flesh (and movement), in terms of the body's interiority and exteriority. In this way by emphasising (a gyneacentric approach to) interiority the tangible becomes crucial in feminine perception. Perhaps the reception of the installation can be informed by this corporeal sensibility, whereby the interiority (and exteriority) of the maternal body could be represented through the arrangement of the contents of the installation. In the following section I approach the open design of *Diagram 2* as a representation of the maternal-feminine body's interiority (and exteriority). Specifically an interiority (and exteriority) that is not figured purely as an ocular process of spatiality or in terms of what is open or closed to the visible. I approach *Diagram 2* as a process of fragmentation of the installation, structured through the props' organisation, materiality and maternal theme; transferral of spaces, between the scaffolding-

²¹⁶ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p.146.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

area and the screen; and the participants' and audience's perceptions respectively. This structure offers up a potential way of thinking about how feminine perception/spatiality might deform the gaze. However, I am not attempting to figure the female gaze, or for that matter, intrauterine vision or envisioning. I am, however, concerned with my central research questions' enquiry in terms of exploring how gyneacentric reception of a representation of the feminine and the maternal might arise, and how fragmenting the inter-relationality of the contents of the installation might be registered as a process of feminine spatiality.

Bourgeois' Cells & Medusa

Choosing the kind of props that might compose the installation as a feminised scene needs revision. The installation in the nightclub needs to be composed as a theatre for interaction, inter-relationality and performance. In addition, the installation should be composed as a site for perceiving the maternal-feminine in some way, like that of an obstetrician (especially with regard to the camera in *Diagram 2*). The installation should be figured as a site for participants to explore a representation of the maternal and the feminine's interiority, so as to begin to figure her ineffability differently. Reflecting on my analysis of audience and participants relations in *Part 1* and on the solution proposed to *Diagram 1* in *Diagram 2*, I imagine that although there could be an identifiatory relation between the audience and the participants that they would perhaps nevertheless receive the relation differently. Through the participants' interaction with the props, this interaction could be received by an audience as actively composing a feminised space.

I imagine that the props could gesture the feminine and the maternal through a network of references that gather together through participants interaction to form a *feminine syntax* through their inter-relational exchanges. Feminine syntax is composed of a gestural feminine language which is potentially difficult to read, because the traditional definition of the feminine masquerade constrains the feminine to composing *normal woman* (in phallogocentrism). But as Irigaray proposes, the feminine's gestures are perceivable as a form of feminine syntax, because of what 'resists or subsists "beyond"',²¹⁸ from within her (interiority) as a gestural feminine language. 'I think the place where it [feminine syntax] could best be deciphered is in the gestural code of women's bodies'.²¹⁹

²¹⁸Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 134.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

My approach to organising the scene of the installation is informed by the way Hillary Robinson discusses the notion of *feminine space* in her interpretation of Louise Bourgeois' *Cells*²²⁰ through Irigaray's theories.²²¹ Although I approach the composition of my installation with Robinson's interpretation of *Cells* in mind, I will not be organising the scene in terms of *visual material*, as suggested by Robinson. Rather, I imagine that the scene could be organised in terms of material that is inter-related and symbolically manifested through the register of the tangible. Robinson describes the feminine symbolically, as meaning maker, as manifesting between the objects in *Cells* in the negative:

[Cells refer] in both their materiality and its working to a well-established tradition of object-making, are placed in space juxtaposed with other materials or things (respectively in these instances, old chairs and stools, and old taps and a table guillotine) in a manner clearly compromising that tradition. Likewise, 'found objects' in the works are not placed to emphasise their surreal nature or their usage as universal symbols, nor to encourage a reading of them as fetish objects; rather they are used as visual material through which an idiosyncratic narrative is being articulated; non-capitalised objects, which we have to work to create something.²²²

I reflect on Irigaray's proposition for a, sexually different language, feminine syntax through Robinson's analyses of Bourgeois' *Cells* as artworks which compose feminine language through grouping objects which together accumulatively bring about a feminised meaning. Robinson describes how feminine language emerges not through the objects themselves, but through their inter-relationality; which maps the feminine negative through the spaces between the objects, so that the spaces between the objects inter-relate and create feminine syntax. This is similar to the way in which Irigaray describes language as a set of words which can only create meaning because of the gaps between the words – silences which compose (her) language in the negative.²²³

²²⁰ Refer to fig. xxxiv. Louise Bourgeois, *Cells* (Eyes and Mirrors), 1989 - 93 on page 155.

²²¹ Robinson, H. *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women*. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006).

²²² *Ibid.* p. 138.

²²³ 'What is called for instead is an examination of the *operation of the "grammar"* of each figure of discourse, its syntactic laws or requirements, its imaginary configurations, its metaphoric networks, and also, of course, what it does not articulate at the level of utterance: its silences'. Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 75.

Perhaps this could suggest feminised spatiality as a method of exploration and as a potential register of experience in participant/audience reception. I also propose that perhaps inter-relationality and feminine syntax might provide a way to develop a method of mapping the feminine negative (through the plans for the installation), that is, as a feminised cartographic process in the thesis.

I am returning to the issue of the feminine negative because, as articulated at the beginning of this thesis, woman is figured as the site of perpetual loss, as a body which is figured as the site/sight of fear of castration (as determined by Freud). Furthermore, this structure concerns power. In Irigaray's discussion of the master slave dialectic she comments: 'Only the recognition of the other as sexuate offers this possibility. Between woman and man, man and woman, recognition requires the labour of the negative'.²²⁴ Here Irigaray proposes that for the feminine negative to be addressed as a sexually different subjectivity, the negative has to be worked into a position of power in relation with the other (who is always already the master).

In this section I discuss gyneacentric feminism²²⁵ to begin laying the theoretical grounds, through the notion of the *monstrous feminine*, for the inter-relational exchanges between the installation's contents and the making of the props, so as to work through the feminine negative. I also interpret Bourgeois' *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* through the myth of *Perseus and Medusa*, in an attempt to unpack the invisibilities of the monstrous feminine's body as the site of disempowered and castrated woman, determined through the logic of phalloculocentrism.

I approach the plan for the installation through the notion of fragmentation, (which was proposed in my analysis of the video of *A Room of One's Own*). However, instead of thinking through fragmentation as an exteriorised process

²²⁴ Irigaray, L. *Key Writings*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 10.

²²⁵ Gyneacentrism is a term that counters the male centred perspective, it proposes that approaching the world from woman's experience must be accounted for positively in terms of sexual difference. Though I am applying Irigaray's gyneacentrically orientated theorising in this thesis, other important feminists have also helped to develop this term, such as Elaine Showalter, who developed the term gynocritic to acknowledge a space for women's literature, writing, and speaking as woman. See: Showalter, E. *New Feminist Criticism, Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. New York: Pantheon Books, (1985).

of imaging the feminine, in this section I focus on how fragmenting her representation might be actioned through representing maternal interiority. I intend to include props that I will make for the installation (*Diagram 2*) in an attempt to devise a feminine lexicon. I also intend to include found objects, such as gynaecological instruments²²⁶ (refer to figure. xxxiii.), so as to represent her interiority. I propose to structure the installation through a gyneacentric (feminist) framework by mixing different made and found props to create a fragmented scene that references the maternal-feminine to indicate a way of looking inside her body, e.g. speculums, cameras, and props. I intend to bring together props whose specific ergonomic design is meant for the female body, for example the speculum, which Irigaray devises as an inverted mirror for woman's sex in her thesis: *The Speculum of the Other Woman*.²²⁷ I imagine that the speculums in the installation could be arranged on trolleys that borrow the aesthetics of asylum ward trolleys, to point to Freud's first question: 'What do women want?'²²⁸ The speculum opens up and reflects woman's interiority, reflecting what is not visible, like an underground chamber, a cave, as situated in Irigaray's discussion of *Plato's Cave*.²²⁹ The (apparent) invisibility of her sex in a phallogocentric structuration of woman situates her as the negative. I am attempting to work from her negative position, to propose that the feminine and the maternal might subvert a phallogocentric gaze. So that her negativity might be considered as a productive and necessary aspect to her representation. I think that the feminine negative should not only be defined and represented as the silences in language, and as the gaps between objects that organise a

²²⁶ 'Irigaray is well aware of the associations of the convex mirror with gynaecological instruments and the knife-edge along which she travels – the attempt to develop an analogy in a syntax appropriate for women, while still speaking in a Symbolic that needs to undo its own phallogocentricity.' Robinson, H. Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006), p. 72.

²²⁷ Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985).

²²⁸ Letter to Marie Bonaparte, as quoted in Jones, E. Sigmund Freud: Life and Work. London: Hogarth P, (1955).

²²⁹ 'But this cave is already, and ipso facto, a speculum. An inner space of reflection. Polished, and polishing, fake offspring. Opening, enlarging, contriving the scene of representation, the world as representation. All is organized into cavities, spheres, sockets, chambers, enclosures, simply because the speculum is put in the way. The operation is abortive—naturally—since only reflection is safe and spawns misbegotten freaks'. Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 255.



Fig. xxx. Props (Photograph: speculums for the installation)

potentially feminised scene – as processes of absence that structure the visible space – because though these may disrupt a phalloculocentric reading they propose to do so passively. Therefore my thesis explores a way to reference the feminine negative's interiority *actively*. I think that the feminine negative might actively disrupt the gaze if her ineffability is referenced through the props and the on-screen image. Perhaps this could disturb audience reception. Instead of encountering a continuously desirable image of the feminine the audience might receive the images'/props' representation of monstrous woman as a site from which to avert their gaze.

I think that *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* figures as a model for staging my installation because of its representations of sight, the feminine and the maternal. *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* is composed of various objects which are centred on the theme of vision and the feminine. The installation is comprised of a stone bust in the centre of the cage, which resembles breasts and eyes. The stone eyes seem to be looking up at a mirror on the ceiling of the cage which reflects them. In front of the stone eyes there is a vanity mirror, with two other mirrors to the left and to the right of it, and two mirrors behind the polished stone eyes reflect its roughly hewn rear. The various motifs of looking capture the viewer inside the cage, imaging the viewer over and over again in the various mirrors' reflective surfaces. The very process of peering in through the metal mesh at these different objects captures the viewer's image within the artwork, mirroring/imaging them in its theatrical setting. Because of its many mirrors the viewer's image might be repeated and fragmented over the surface of *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*, potentially maintaining the viewer's perspective at the centre of the look.

I think that the contents of *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* are reminiscent of the ancient Greek myth of *Perseus and Medusa*. Medusa is the monstrous woman (par excellence) that turns those who gaze at her to stone. According to Freud, Medusa's head is symbolically the site of woman's genital horror, the site from which to avert the gaze. Freud discusses this in relation to her head being decapitated in the myth. 'To decapitate=to castrate. The terror of Medusa is thus

a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something'.²³⁰ Accordingly, Freud situates Medusa's head as the representation of fear of castration. Gazing at Medusa's head petrifies the gazer because Medusa's hair (though in the form of snakes) represents woman's pubic hair, which disguises her castration, representing her lack of the phallus; her head is imaged as multiple phalluses. Thus in the event of gazing at Medusa's head the body becomes stiff, turns to stone, like an erection, and so the man is reassured that he still possess a penis when he regards her castrated visage. In Freud's words, 'the sight of Medusa's head makes the spectator stiff with terror, turns him to stone. Observe that we have here once again the same origin from the castration complex and the same transformation of affect! For becoming stiff means an erection'²³¹ (the erection is a product of desire). Medusa is the site/sight of the fear of castration (through Freud's interpretation of the myth), she can only exchange in the visible by oscillating between being the phallus and lacking the phallus. In Creed's interpretation of Freud's position on the myth, 'Medusa's head serves as a classic fetish object; it conforms both the absence and presence of the mother's penis'.²³² In my interpretation of Creed's analysis, Medusa's head is not determined as passive and castrated, but as an aggressive and castrating power. Creed describes each snake on Medusa's head not as a phallic substitute, as determined by Freud, but as constituting multiple fanged mouths, which symbolically represent the vagina dentata. Creed conceives that the *monstrous feminine* could potentially subvert phalloculocentric hegemony of subjectivity and representation, through what she defines as a culturally repressed notion of the maternal and the feminine's power to castrate.²³³

In my interpretation of *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* Medusa is not illustrated in the artwork, she is elsewhere. I think that the references to Medusa's character in the myth (stone, eyes, reflection) are negatively organised and composed

²³⁰ Freud, S. Medusa's Head. In: Rieff, P. (ed.) The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud. New York: Collier Books, (1963), p. 212.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Creed, B. The Monstrous Feminine. London: Routledge, (1993) p. 111.

²³³ Ibid. pp. 105 – 121.

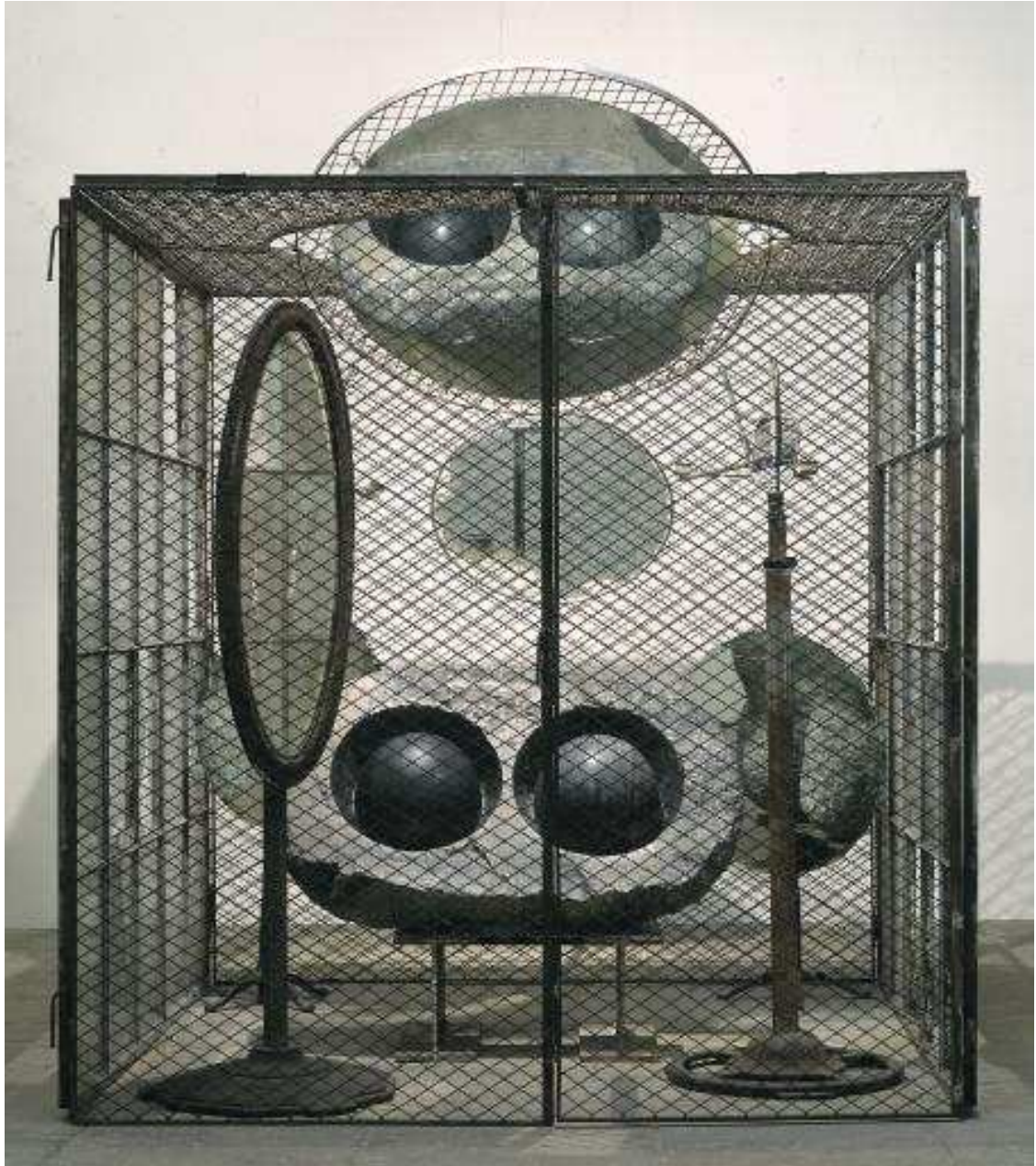


Fig. xxxi. Louise Bourgeois, *Cells (Eyes and Mirrors)*, 1989 - 93

through a choice set of objects in Bourgeois' installation to represent the consequences of staring at her horrifying image:

- the stone eyes represent being turned to stone by looking at Medusa, a petrifying/petrified gaze,
- the mirrors represent the reflective properties of Perseus' shield which helped to slay Medusa.

I think that the way in which Medusa and the consequences of looking at her are represented in *Cells (eyes and Mirrors)* paradoxically construct her as a proper site/sight of ineffable spectacle, as the phallic woman. Medusa's monstrosity is phallogocentrically structured both in life and death. She cannot be looked at when alive; otherwise the horror of her castrated sex petrifies/kills the gazer. Furthermore, Freud determines the instance when Medusa is beheaded as her symbolic castration. However, in the Greek myth, her ability to petrify the onlooker with her head is not extinguished in death, only her agency is extinguished, as she loses the power to direct her petrifying gaze. After decapitating her, Perseus keeps Medusa's head in a bag, only removing his possession (her head) from the bag to direct her petrifying gaze at what he wants to petrify.

I think that Medusa's head is the exemplar of the *dark continent*, she cannot be directly regarded by the gaze. Her head is the proper site/sight of the aversion of the gaze. I think that this is described in the Greek myth when Perseus looks at her reflection in his shield (instead of looking directly at her) so as to not be petrified, in order to locate, slay, capture and control her. Perseus is able to kill her because she is reflected in his shield. The shield acts as a mirror of his desire. He wants to capture and possess her image. As soon as she is imaged in his mirrored shield she no longer belongs to herself. She is slain because he traps her through imaging her. Perseus can only regard Medusa's representation, her image. In my understanding this is also how women are figured as appearances in phallogocentric structuration of woman, in which women are maintained as images through the gaze's process of capture and possession. I think that Medusa's head represents woman's inability to return the gaze, or, indeed, to possess a gaze of her own.

In *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* I think that Medusa is situated elsewhere, in the installation's masquerade of the feminine. Medusa can only be gestured, suggested through the objects, for she cannot be represented, or, indeed, looked at which is similar to my proposition for referencing the negative in *Diagram 2* as a potential way of mapping a feminised cartographic process.

Perhaps my proposition to organise the props and imaging the participant and the audience on-screen could be paralleled with the way in which *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* is organised through its contents, to represent the feminine negatively by capturing viewers in its mirrors. In *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* the viewer might be interpreted as being enfolded between her negative representations, between their actual position outside the artwork's contents and the artwork's gaze at the viewer represented through their reflection in the mirror(s). Perhaps this process might double the viewer's position between the two sites/sights and potentially fragment the viewer's site/sight and therefore could be interpreted as a feminine form of inter-relationality and spatiality. Furthermore, the viewer could be captured by more than one mirror without realising it, further representing the fragmentation of the viewer's image and position in *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*. I think this process of fragmentation is similar to the way in which woman's image is structured and fragmented under a phallogocentric gaze as appearance and disappearance. In this way the viewer could become included within the interior scene of *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*. The relation between the participants and the screen in *Diagram 2* could be imagined in a similar way to the interpretation of the relation I suggest between the viewer and mirrors in *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*. Might the participants be caught and enfolded between the scaffolding-area and the screen in the installation, and could this process be interpreted as a fragmented feminised relation and spatiality?

The apparatus (the mirrors) in *Cells (eyes and mirrors)* is exposed. I think that the process of enfoldment between the viewer and the mirrors is possible because the very process entailed in viewing the artwork means that the artwork will probably return the viewer's image through their inter-related exchange with it. In *Diagram 2*, meanwhile, the relation between the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image is not structured with this kind of viewing/imaging relation. *Diagram 2* might not directly mirror the viewer/audience. Rather the mirroring itself would be deferred through the camera, which would capture the participants instead of the audience. On the other hand, in *Cells (eyes and*

mirrors) being part of the audience does not set the viewer apart from participating, for encountering the artwork already means that the viewer participates in imaging its surface.

The power of the one who looks and the one who captures and detains the other in their look is central to thinking through whether *Diagram 2* will be an appropriate way to design the installation in the nightclub. I do not believe that the gaze's uneven distribution of viewing, as discussed through *Diagram 1*, has been resolved in *Diagram 2*'s plan. I think that the uneven power distribution of the gaze in *Diagram 2* does not only reside in the potential relations between the participants and the situation of the projections on-screen, as an enfoldment between viewer and mirror – as suggested in the case of *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*. Perhaps, in *Diagram 2*, the uneven power distribution of the gaze is located in the camera's potential to mediate and construct the audience's reception of the on-screen image. Although *Diagram 2*'s design proposes to rearrange the composition of the installation to afford greater mobility and inter-relational exchanges between its contents, the camera remains fixed. Although I have proposed that inter-relationally might subvert an audience's phallogulocentric gaze in *Diagram 2*'s design I imagine that the camera's fixity might maintain the proper position and process of the (male) gaze. By overseeing the installation, the camera could, in turn, prevent the rest of the contents from interrelating and exchanging evenly. Which leads me to ask how might a feminised process of spatiality arise in an audience's reception of the installation, and how might their phallogulocentric gaze be deformed in relation to the video apparatus?

The Monstrous: Props

This section is concerned with the making of the props for the installation. First, I situate my approach to making in relation to the notion of the *between* as the feminine negative, and in terms of visibility and invisibility of the maternal body as a potentially monstrous site/sight. Second, I explain the processes and the theories which inform the making of three props, towards addressing the position of the camera (as another prop) in relation to the figuration of the maternal-feminine²³⁴ so as to propose a way to restructure audience and participant reception of the image in the installation. I am approaching the making of the monstrous props through Irigaray's theory of the maternal-feminine because I intend to represent feminine interiority through the props. The maternal-feminine is a concept concerning a form of sexually differentiated perception determined by the potential to envelop/perpetually touch an invisible pre-nascent body within, such that inter-relational exchanges with an other are predicated on touch rather than vision. For this reason I set about making tactile props, to incite participants to touch the props in the installation. I imagine that by making props that represent the maternal-feminine in the negative, participants might encounter a scene which images maternal-feminine interiority not as a biologically determined representation but through a gyneacentric perspective.

I approach this issue through the potential for the feminine to manifest *between*, this concept of the negative is determined by Irigaray as a not-subject in terms of a binary relation, in which woman is regarded as zero (negative) in relation to man who is one.²³⁵ I intend to approach the feminine negative

²³⁴ 'Opens up the question of "God" but in a certain forgetfulness of the primary maternal-feminine. Which entails the fact that God is always entrusted to the look and never sufficiently imagined as tactile bliss. Who imagines the beyond as an infinite blissful touching? Being touched by God, for example. Which is impossible to imagine insofar as God is the counterweight to immersion in intrauterine touching?' Irigaray, L. *The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm"*. In: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 136.

²³⁵ 'She is neither one nor two. Rigorously speaking, she cannot be identified either as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition. Further, she has no "proper" name. And her sexual organ, which is

differently through the *monstrous feminine*.²³⁶ I shift focus from a binary relation to a spatial representation and relationality of the feminine negative in Irigaray's theories. The between references Irigaray's notion of the feminine as constituting the negative space between objects (which are situated as masculine); and feminine spatiality as a necessary invisible architecture which structures the (masculine) objects in the visible, whether perceiving in the actual or imaginary (for example: in a dream).²³⁷ I am also using the notion of between as an umbrella term to discuss the inter-relationality of the props in my plans for the installation, in terms of interpreting a potential for inter-relational exchanges as an invisible feminine architecture which structures the props.

The between is also used to represent different theorists' interpretations of the female/woman/feminine in the negative. Irigaray's, Kristeva's, Haraway's, Lykke's and Braidotti's theories on sexual difference all emerge from epistemologically different positions; however, they share a similar sensibility. Concerned with the negative, these theorists refigure female/woman/feminine's spatiality, temporality and mobility in sexual difference. Though dissimilar in their methods, their lexica are synonymous and can be understood through the prefix inter and trans, mapping the female/woman/feminine negative using terms such as: between, threshold, border, gap, boundary, margin, etc.

In the third phase of her theoretical work, Irigaray maintains that the between is a threshold for encounter between differently sexuate subjects;²³⁸ for Nina Lykke it is a:

not one organ, is counted as none. The negative, the underside, the reverse of the only visible [...]: the penis'. Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 26.

²³⁶ As discussed in the section Diagram 2, *Bourgeois' Cells & Medusa*. Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993).

²³⁷ 'Obeying processes that already paralyze with the "body's" system of gestures within a given graphic order, etc. Why not have recalled those "pictures" made for children, pictographs in which the hunter and the hunted, and their dramatic relationships, are to be discovered between the branches, made out from between the trees. From the spaces between the figures, or stand-in figures. Spaces that organize the scene, blanks that sub-tend the scenes structuration and that will yet not be read as such. Or not read at all? Not seen at all? Never in truth represented or representable, though this is not to say that they have no effect on the present scenography'. Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 138.

²³⁸ Irigaray, L. *The Path Towards the Other*. In: *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008), pp. 1-29.

border. [...] between the 'artefactual' and the 'natural'.²³⁹ Kristeva's notion of woman emerges in the *gap*, which is between flesh, death and decay: 'Filth is not a quality in itself, but it applies only to what relates to a *boundary* and, more particularly, represents the object jettisoned out of that boundary, its other side, a margin.'²⁴⁰

I am approaching the figuration of the props and their arrangement to investigate how boundaries could be figured through the inter-relationality of the installation's contents, in Haraway's words:

Their boundaries materialize in social interaction. Boundaries are drawn by mapping practices; 'objects' do not pre-exist as such. Objects are boundary projects. But boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky. What boundaries provisionally contain remains generative, productive of meanings and bodies. Siting (sighting) boundaries is a risky practice.²⁴¹

Using this notion of a boundary body as a body situated in difference potentially reflects the female body's inherent (in)visibility. She cannot be pinned down; her body is always subject to (monstrous) change. While the male body's visibility is fixed because the phallus and vision are privileged and the female body is regarded as less visible than his in phallogocentric discourse. The female body is subject to greater invisibilities, in particular with regard to the maternal. Man, the original phallogocentric subject, has to separate from the mother in order to become a subject (as previously discussed in the sections on fetishism and narcissism). In Irigaray's psychoanalytic and linguistic analysis of difference concerning this Oedipal relation: 'the first other in the life of man, the first human *you* with whom he is in constant communication is a feminine-maternal *you*. But this *you* becomes merged in a nature from which man has to differ in order to become a subject'.²⁴²

²³⁹ 'First, I ask the monster metaphor to perform as a representation of boundary phenomena in the interdisciplinary or hybrid grey zone between the cultural and natural sciences. In this zone boundary subjects and boundary objects, monsters which cannot be defined as either human or non-human, challenge established orders between the sciences. This is a zone where confrontation between feminism and science takes place. [...] two other boundary figures, goddesses and cyborgs (that is, hybrids of machines and organisms), both of which have attracted a great amount of feminist attention and debate [...] They are called forth to serve as metaphors for another border: that between 'the artefactual' and 'the natural'. Lykke, N. & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: feminist confrontations with science, medicine, and cyberspace*. London: Zed Books, (1996), p. 14.

²⁴⁰ Kristeva, J. *Powers of Horror*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1982), p. 69.

²⁴¹ Haraway, D. *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. In: *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. London: Free Associations Books, (1991), pp. 200-201.

²⁴² Irigaray, L. *Key Writings*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 38.

I imagine that the props in the installation will not be exact copies of any kind of real body. Rather, they might reference abjectly familiar boundary bodies: *monstrosities*,²⁴³ so as to subvert biological determinist representations of the female body. I imagine that the monstrous props could potentially map out the installation as a representation of the mother's abject body in the negative, as a representation of the womb, as a negative cartography. The abject affirms the maternal body between interiority and exteriority, in which the body is extended over and beyond the object and the subject through abjection. The mother is the site of the abject, she is cleaned up in the visible and denied entry into the symbolic (logos) in phallogocentrism, maintaining her in the primal and pre-symbolic scene. In response to this theme, I made tactile objects, props that might be simultaneously desirable and undesirable, as a representation of a liminal zone that reflects the interiority of the female's reproductive system abjectly and monstrously.²⁴⁴ I began making representations of deformed breasts and fetuses with a view to attracting and repelling participants' interaction in the installation.

The body must bear no trace of its debt to nature: it must be clean and proper in order to be fully symbolic. In order to confirm that, it should endure no gash other than that of circumcision, equivalent to sexual separation and/or separation from the mother. Any other would be the sign of belonging to impure, the non-separate, the non-symbolic, the non-holy.²⁴⁵

The maternal-feminine²⁴⁶ is a dirty body that menstruates and gives birth, it is a body which is subject to deformities.²⁴⁷ Hers is a body that needs to be

²⁴³ By monstrous I do not mean uncanny as determined by Sigmund Freud in his development of the Unheimlich, meaning: not home like, which he situates as the womb, the first dwelling of mankind. Foster, H. *Compulsive Beauty*. London: MIT Press, (1993).

²⁴⁴ Fletcher, J. Art, Love, and Melancholy in the Work of Julia Kristeva. In: Fletcher, J. (ed.) *Abjection Melancholia and Love*. London: Routledge, (1990), pp. 24-41.

²⁴⁵ Kristeva, J. *Powers of Horror*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1982) p. 102.

²⁴⁶ Irigaray, L. *The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty. The Visible and the Invisible, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm"*. In: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 144.

²⁴⁷ 'The woman's body can change, shape in pregnancy and child-bearing; it is therefore capable of defeating the notion of a fixed bodily form, of visible, recognizable, clear, and distinct shapes as that which marks the contour of the body. She is morphologically dubious. The fact that the female body can change, shape so drastically is troublesome in the eyes of the logocentric economy within which to see is the primary act of knowledge and the gaze, the basis of all epistemic awareness'. Braidotti, R. *Nomadic*

constantly cleaned of blood and deformity in the visible and constructed as a perpetual appearance in a phalloculocentric economy of representation. The props might also subvert the construction of normal woman (as determined by Freud) and woman as the same by representing the monstrous-feminine, which could situate her in the context of difference:

Woman as a sign of difference is Monstrous. If we define the monster as a bodily entity that is anomalous and deviant vis-à-vis the norm, then we can argue that the female body shares with the monster the privilege of bringing out a unique blend of fascination and horror. This logic of attraction and repulsion is extremely significant; psychoanalytic theory takes it as the fundamental structure of the mechanism of desire, and as such, of the constitution of the neurotic symptom: the spasm of the hysteric turns to nausea, displacing itself from its object.²⁴⁸

Representing woman monstrously subverts her phalloculocentric construction because the mother of all monsters is woman, the woman's monstrous bodily deformity during pregnancy is the origin and perpetuator of the monster.²⁴⁹ Moreover, woman's body is both monstrous in itself and potentially harbours monsters in pregnancy. She is always a site of potential pregnancies,²⁵⁰ because in the initial stages of pregnancy her body does not visibly display her pregnancy, which also means that her body is always potentially about to be monstrously deformed. Taking this approach into account the props I make also represent alien and malformed bodies, responding to the myth of woman's psychic power to deform the foetus.²⁵¹

The materiality of the props should provoke interaction, to promote tangible exchanges between participants. I investigated processes of making that might imitate the body materially, by using flesh-like materials such as silicone, latex,

Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. New York: Columbia University Press, (1994), p. 80.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 81.

²⁴⁹ Braidotti, R. *Traces of Wonder Signs of Doubt*. In: Lykke, N. & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*. London: Zed Books, (1996).

²⁵⁰ Irigaray, L. *The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm"*. In: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), pp.127 – 153.

²⁵¹ 'There is no doubt, the 'imagination' hypothesis is the longest lasting theory of monstrous births. It attributes to the mother the capacity to undo the living capital she is carrying in her womb; the power of her imagination is such that she can actually kill or deform her creation'. Braidotti, R. *Traces of Wonder Signs of Doubt*. In: Lykke, N. & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*. London: Zed Books, (1996), p.145.



Fig. xxxii. Foetus Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

wax; to imitate the internal female body on the external surface of the props, e.g. the foetus like prop's surface is composed of representations of veins and organs. I used this method of making the props to tackle the notion of woman's invisible tendencies, to counter Freud's positioning of the feminine as the dark continent:

The concavity – the space through and behind the flat mirror's surface – scintillates and burns infinitely. This is not the dark continent, the dark cave, the yawning gap of the vagina dentata. Each of these terms – and others related – are products of phallogentric fear of multiplicity and difference; phallogentric in nature they are immutable notions stored in fixity.²⁵²

Here Robinson clearly expresses the problems of phallogentrism as fixing the subject through the framework of castration anxiety and the mirror stage, through (male) domination of the (female) other in the visible, paralysing woman as phallic vision. Furthermore, phallogentric fragmentation of woman's body, determined through its invisibilities, occurs because of the horror between her legs. Men cannot look at her sex because this is the cradle of madness, it is the site of *fear* of castration that structures his narcissism and

²⁵² Robinson, H. *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray – the politics of art by women*. London: I.B. Tauris, (2006) p. 68.

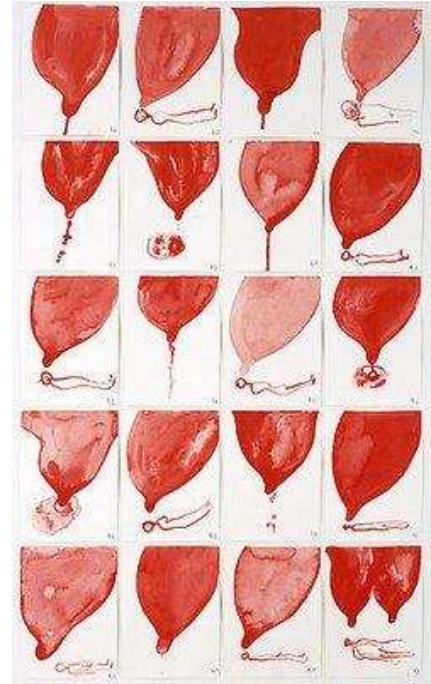


Fig. xxxiii. Louise Bourgeois, *The Good Breast* (2007) Gouache on paper.

fetishism.²⁵³ My project does not seek to make woman visible, but rather to make tangible representations of the maternal-feminine. By interacting with the props participants might orientate images that represent the maternal-feminine on-screen. I imagine that these on-screen images might not seduce the audience per se, as the images of the maternal-feminine would monstrously represent her interiority.

The representations of monstrous feminine bodies I made are not hyper-real, they are not imitative. The props are not pertaining to be accurate copies of the body, or a version of the original.²⁵⁴ In the narcissistic model: the feminine is not more than an imaged imitation (mirroring his desire), and the maternal is not maintained as more than biologically determined (as an animalistic body figured in nature). Attempting to situate the feminine and the maternal in the visible would simply figure her as an imitation, maintaining her in the logic of the copy

²⁵³ Freud, S. Fetishism. In: *Sexuality and Psychology of Love*. New York: Collier Books, (1972), pp. 214-219.

²⁵⁴ Baudrillard, J. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Michigan: University of Michigan, (2008), pp. 1-3.

of a copy, as perpetual appearance, which she already is in a phalloculocentric structure. I am trying to refigure the negative to situate the maternal-feminine *between* (the negative) by proposing a shift in the register of audience and participant reception/perception through the tangible, in which perception is not established through the look. In Irigaray's words:

the look can never take up the tangible. Thus I never see that in which I touch or am touched.²⁵⁵ The tangible 'remains instead the ground that is available for all the senses [...] the tangible is the matter and memory of all the senses [...] it is never completely situated in the visible.'²⁵⁶

Approaching the props' composition through the tangible could potentially provide a way for participants to inter-relate with them through an embodied, gyneacentric register.

Bronze Prop

Whilst planning the bronze prop I approached the female body as an explicit and pornographic²⁵⁷ site, fragmented and devised as sexual components.²⁵⁸ I began by fetishising woman's body, by isolating one body part: the breasts. I then figured the surface of the prop with breast like forms, representing an aspect of her reproductive system monstrously through the fragmentation and repetition of her body.

The prop was composed through the logic of a harness, by shaping the clay form (which would later be bronze) into a network of channels, to map out where the breast like forms would protrude. The channels were shaped across the surface of the clay to designate where the harness would be fastened. The harness was devised in this way to create an illusionary affect, so it would appear that the bronze was being acted upon by the harness, as if causing the bronze to bulge out like deformed breasts between the leather straps. The clay

²⁵⁵ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 135.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 137.

²⁵⁷ Power Febres, C. *Liberalism, Feminism and Republicanism on Freedom of Speech: The Cases of Pornography and Racist Hate Speech*, London: UCL, (2011).

²⁵⁸ MacKinnon, C. *Only Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, (1993).

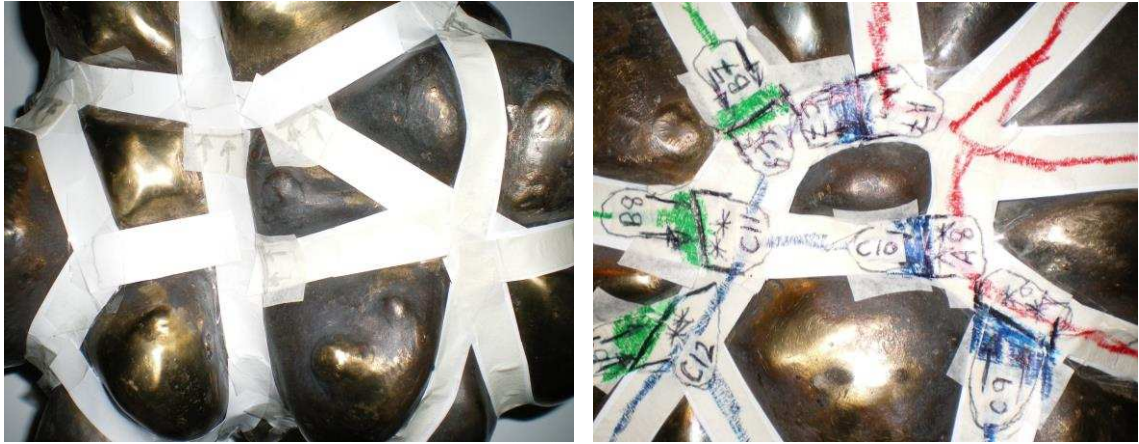


Fig. xxxiv. Bronze Prop (Photographs x2: documentation of the making process)

form not only pre-empted where the harness would be, but also proposed to construct its deceptive affects on the bronze. The harness mapped out a woman's body through a restrictive leather network, representing the restriction of her subjectivity in a phalloculocentric economy.

The prop was figured as a masquerade of the feminine in clay, replicating her body through the casting and mould making process. I chose this technique of making because it predicates repetition and seemingly bears a correlation to the discourse of mimicry and the maternal. The primary mould in the casting process, the mould from which endless copies are made, is called the mother mould. The harness was made after the bronze was figured, stitching the peach coloured leather to appear as though it impacted and misshaped the bronze breast like forms. Pertaining to be figured by the leather harness, I imagined that the bronze prop would be like a double movement between the actual practicalities and capabilities of the materials involved and the representation of constructed affects and effects. The prop was constructed in this way as an analogy of woman's body, to allude to the double event of the feminine masquerade. The prop attempts to manifest woman in the negative by acknowledging the structuration of woman in a phalloculocentric construct in order to undo it through symbolising woman within this very construct. By



Fig. xxxv. Louise Bourgeois, *Mamelles*, (1991 – 2001) Pink rubber, fibre glass and wood.

performing the construct, the very act of the performance acknowledges the construction of the performance and therefore alters it.²⁵⁹

I wanted the prop to connote woman's body being shaped into something unnatural or disfiguring, as a monster, by sewing a representation of woman into a harness in order to shape the body, or to control the body, or to cradle it, and in another way, to conceal it. I investigated different kinds of harnesses and their differing connotations, wherein a harness may act as a kind of support for the body, for suspension, for imprisoning, etc. For example, harnesses such as abseiling harnesses, horse bridals, corsets, brassieres and chastity belts are figured similarly, with various adjustable straps to fit variations of the same form (be they animal or human). The harness I made borrowed aesthetics of brassieres, as each network of straps frames a breast like shape. The overall structure and logic of the bronze prop's harness is based on a parachute harness. I wanted the prop to connote the parachute harness' restrictive qualities, the way in which it acts as a kind of cradle, as a form of protection and retention for the body. Informed by these notions, I imagined that the prop would represent the tension between suspension and falling in relation to the feminine's unstable subjectivity.

I imagine hanging the bronze part of the prop from a scaffolding bar at breast height, to reflect the position of participants' chests in the installation. The construction of this prop could ensue conflictual connotations of restriction and protection, given the props aesthetics and its context of display; displaying it in the context of a fetish nightclub the prop might reference the fetish harness. I

²⁵⁹ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006).



Fig. xxxvi. Bronze Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

also wanted this prop to reflect the language of bondage in sexual fetishism, with specific attention to the restriction of body parts with leather and rope. Using the tropes of sexual fetishism in the making of the props I wanted to create a tension between tying up and strapping down a woman's body, so as to attempt to represent her as a girdled subjectivity.

The prop was not entirely successful in constructing woman in this double movement between conflicting materials and their proposed illusionary affects. The materials were clearly not constructed in response to each other, the harness seemed to dress the bronze rather than affect the bronze's shaping. Despite this, the bronze prop's harness replicates the fetish costume and the process of strapping oneself up is clearly suggested through its composition. The prop seems to allegorically perform woman, similar to the way in which Pierre Molinier²⁶⁰ performs woman as an other, in this case: the prop as a feminine masquerade. It also serves as a dysfunctional parachute, weighing

²⁶⁰ Molinier, P. Pierre Molinier. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, (1999).

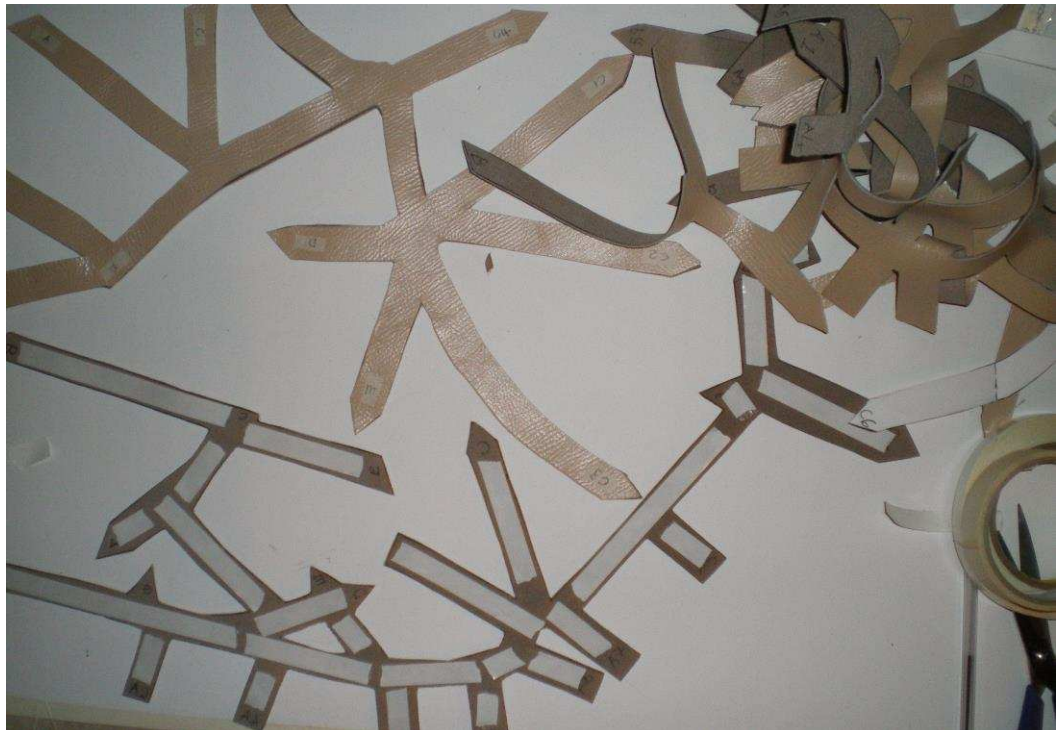
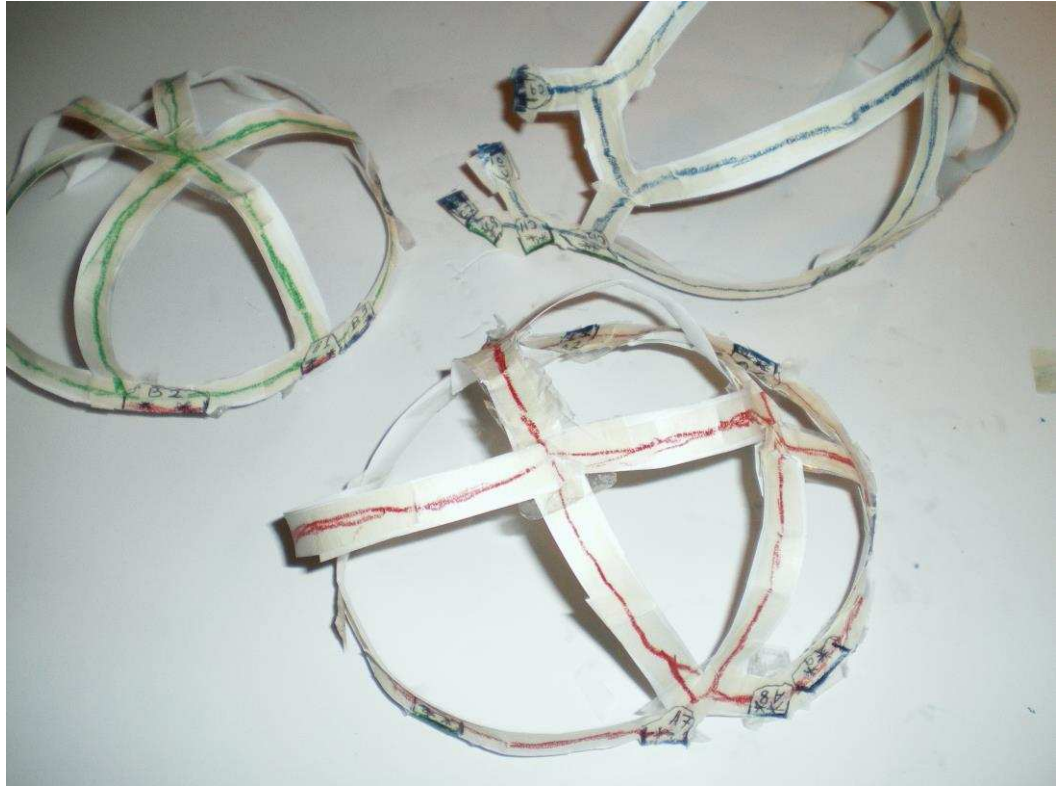


Fig. xxxvii. Bronze Prop (Photographs x2: documentation of the making process)



Fig. xxxviii. Bronze Prop (Photograph)

heavily on the theme of feminine subjectivity undergoing a perpetual process of loss. I reorientated my approach towards the theme of the bestial breast, diseased breast, or deformed breast in preparation for making the next prop.



Fig. xxxix. Bronze Prop (Photograph: detail)

Wax Lumpen Prop

I developed the bronze prop further, using the same mould I began making a hybrid pseudo body in response to this previous leather bound prop. Using wax-pigments that resemble flesh, five wax casts were cut up and reconfigured into one form. I cut up the casts in order to go against the conventions of casting and mould making processes. As this making process usually aims to replicate a form seamlessly. Cutting up the five casts acknowledged the fragmentation of the already monstrously deformed maternal-feminine body of the bronze prop. I made the lumpen prop by using wax and latex, in an attempt to emphasise the fragility of the materials and to emphasise what the materials attempt to imitate, the fragility of skin. Further sexually fetishising woman's body by making fragmented representations of breasts. The repeated forms were once more collected to make a deformed representation of woman, because by casting and re-casting the casts could not be true to the seams of the mould. So I rejoined them differently at the casting seams, moulding the wax into the gaps between the casts to emulate scar tissue and to simulate various stages in the tissue healing process.

I used various pigments to give the impression of bruised skin in various stages of healing across the distorted lumpen shapes, to represent the monstrous between the inside and outside of the body. I responded to notions of



Fig. xxxx. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

nature and culture, making the lumpen prop as a monstrously figured body to appear as though it was deformed from the inside and deformed from the outside (as a bruised and scarred body). I briefly discuss the deformation of female/woman/feminine body from the outside with respects to the violent configuration of her body as phallic appearance. I then discuss the lumpen prop as deformed from within in relation to the generative power of the archaic mother's womb.

By representing bruises and scar tissue on the surface of the prop, I imagine that the prop could convey a history of violence against women. The prop symbolises woman's marked subjectivity, historically configured through patriarchal violence and domination. The prop represents a way of working through the sexed body of woman, as a composite body that is cut and stitched together and imaged through violent reconfigurations (plastic surgery might be an example of this). In one aspect, the composition of the lumpen prop also attempts to draw attention to the way in which women's bodies partake in an ongoing process of desirable deformity in contemporary Western mediated representations. Increasingly, women are under pressure to reconfigure body parts to indicate youthful *femaleness*, such as: breast enlargement and vagi-plasti, to supposedly improve the *appearance* of the body. In this way it might be



Fig. xxxxi. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

proposed that woman's body is mutilated for the purposes of imaging phalloculocentric desire. The female body seems to be in an ongoing process of monstrous reconfiguration, cutting open the inside for the appearance of the outside.²⁶¹ I propose that the surface of the prop represents the castrated mother, and her sex as a wound/phallic image. The woman's body might be said to be portrayed as an explicitly pornographic site for visual consumption, as

²⁶¹ Walter, N. *Living Dolls: The Return of Sexism*. London: Virago Press Ltd., (2010).



Fig. xxxxi. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

an obscene, volatile and violently imaged surface.²⁶² My interpretations so far have concerned the way in which the monstrous female body might be figured from the outside. I will now focus on the lumpen prop's representation of monstrous figuration from the inside of the body, by reflecting on the maternal-feminine's interiority.

I have discussed the monstrous feminine in relation to the normal woman, as an exterior image and appearance, her body's fragmentation as structured through castration anxiety in fetishism and narcissism. I have not, however, discussed this in relation to the womb as a creative force which situates her beyond biological determinism. In Creed's discussion of horror films, the power of the archaic mother is represented through the 'gestating, all-devouring womb'.²⁶³ Furthermore, Creed situates the womb as a bodily interior which has no equivalent in the male. 'Unlike the female genitalia, the womb cannot be constructed as a 'lack' in relation to the penis. The womb is not the site of castration anxiety. Rather, the womb signifies 'fullness' or 'emptiness' but always it is its *own point of reference*.'²⁶⁴ Creed develops the notion of the archaic mother (predominantly through Kristeva's theory of *abjection*), through identifying tacit representations of the archaic mother in horror films as opposed

²⁶² Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988).

²⁶³ Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993), p. 27.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*



Fig. xxxxiii. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photographs x2: documentation of the making process)



Fig. xxxxiv. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photographs x2: documentation of the making process)

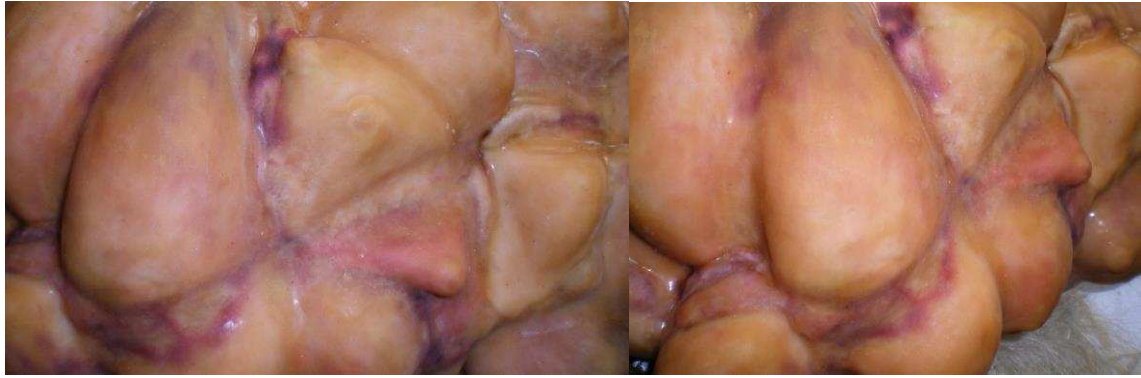


Fig. xxxv. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photographs x2: documentation of the making process)

to explicit representations of her. For example, in Creed's interpretation of the archaic mother in the film *Alien*,²⁶⁵ archaic-mother-alien is referenced through the architecture of the alien ship, like a womb, rather than depicting the alien mother that lays the eggs, which I interpret as a negative representation of the feminine. I have not represented the woman's body par excellence. I have represented disfigured and fragmented versions of a female body, impacted by exterior forces, through the harness around the bronze prop and the bruises and scars of the lumpen prop. Her body is indicated in the props, by representing (deformed) breasts the depiction gestures towards her reproductive interiority, as archaic mother, in terms of their association with the womb. Though the archaic mother is not explicitly evident in the bronze prop and the lumpen prop, I think that with the aid of a different prop, which signals interiority, these props could gesture the womb in the negative.

Knotting the Barbie blonde hair and nestling the hair between the deformed bumps seemed to repeat the problems of the bronze prop, because it seems to be another version of a harness for the prop. I tried instead to animate the prop. I imagine walking the prop on a leash like a dog, and that this could accent its monstrosity. The prop might become animate animal. But I think that the lumpen prop should represent the archaic mother in a more active way, rather than as a passive scarred and bruised body. Creed describes the archaic

²⁶⁵ Scott, R. *Alien*. 20th Century Fox, (1979).



Fig. xxxvi. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

mother as debunking the pre-symbolic phallic mother, in her discussion of the film *Alien*, she points out that what is threatening and subversive about the monstrous archaic mother is that 'Mother Alien is primarily a terrifying figure not because she is castrated but because she castrates'.²⁶⁶

The story board animation of the prop leads me to question how the lumpen prop might be captured and figured on-screen in an active way through participant interaction in the proposition for the installation set out in *Diagram 2*. Imagining the projections on-screen as a kind of womb, I thought about how the prop might be fragmented and reconfigured on-screen, and whether the prop could be figured as another character within the installation through participant interaction.

²⁶⁶ Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993), p. 22.

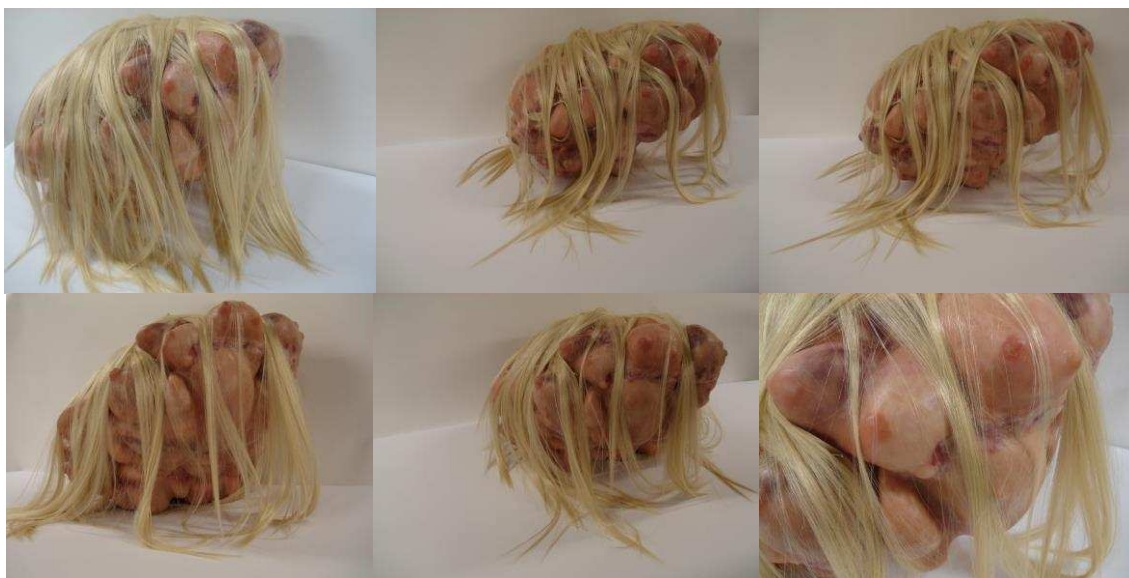


Fig. xxxvii. Wax Lumpen Prop (Photographs x6: documentation of the making process)

I imagine that the props might reference the archaic mother, that is, the mother which conceives without the aid of the phallic father. I imagine that the installation might be structured through the lexica of its contents, its props, between the props; not simply as a form of feminine syntax (as described by Robinson), or as a negative architecture (as theorised by Irigaray), but as props which could perhaps evoke the archaic mother's invisible womb. I propose to attempt to compose the installation as a womb, by referring to the maternal body's interiority, as a site for participant inspection that might:

- open out the womb as a site for touching and tangible exchanges;
- be organised through props that represent the maternal-feminine's body's site/sight as pre-symbolic and ineffable.

Foetus Prop

However, this is not a question of materially mapping out the installation's contents as a literal womb. Rather it concerns the participants interaction with, production and reception of, representations of the pre-symbolic maternal-feminine (props) as a potential way of devising the between: through the

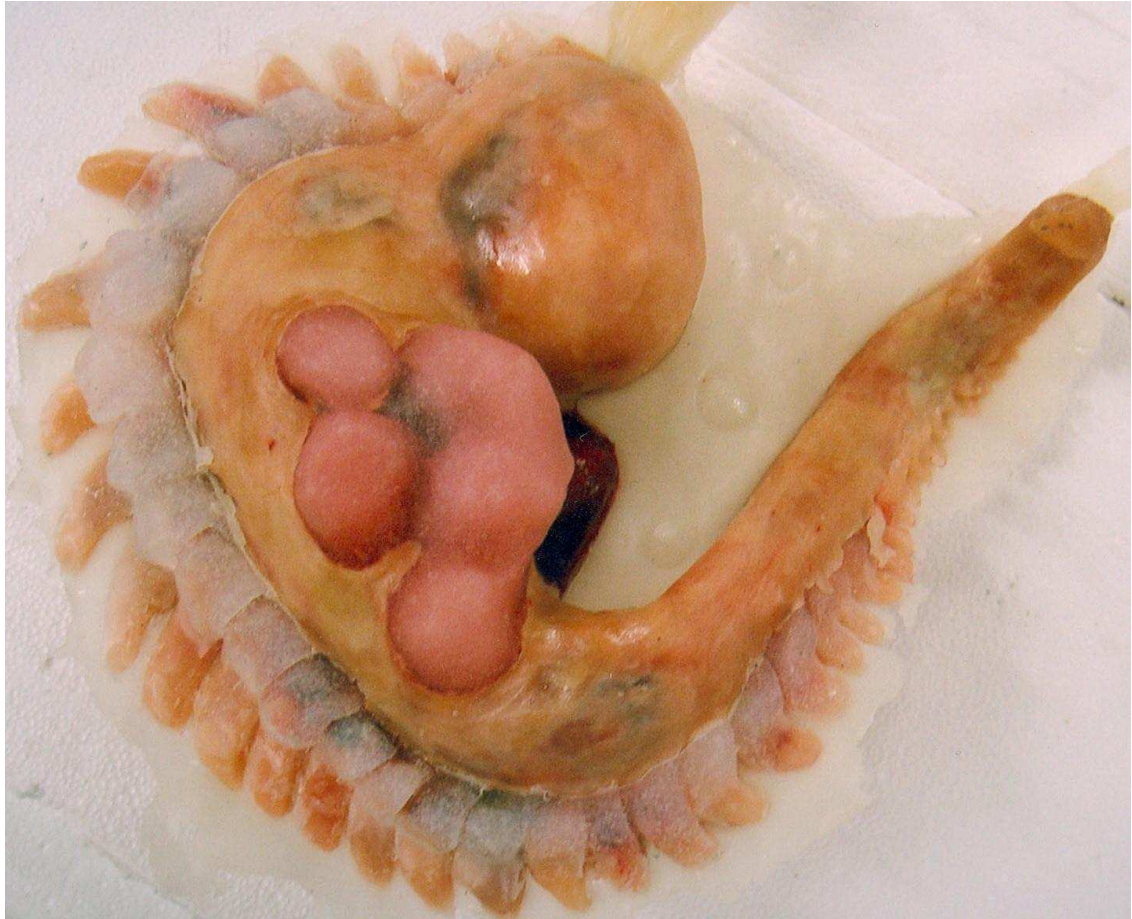


Fig. xxxviii. Foetus Prop (Photograph: documentation of the making process)

immateriality of interaction as constructing the site of the archaic mother's womb. In addition, Irigaray figures the maternal as the '[phenomenological] passage between the interior and exterior landscape'.²⁶⁷ I will continue to approach the question of representation of the maternal by referencing her body's situation between interiority and exteriority.

The following prop I made is fetus-like and proposes to subvert phallogocentric reception by foregrounding the internal alien quality of the body, like a boundary body, to represent a body amidst formation. Emulating a premature abortive instance, like the result of a science experiment that attempts to create a body that is in between the developmental stages of being

²⁶⁷ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p.135.

a recognisable body, like a *Frankenstein* body;²⁶⁸ a body in the stages of a tentative becoming (like the promise of woman's becoming). The foetus-like prop represents the passage between interior and exterior maternal body in the negative because the foetus prop itself is not the maternal body but the representation of its product, more appropriately, in Donna Haraway's terms: '*the promise of more monsters*'.²⁶⁹ Instead of pointing towards woman creating and assembling a *Frankenstein* body, of reinvigorating a dead body, the props' aim to resemble a fragmented body which figures between, as a maternal body in the negative. Furthermore, the foetus prop represents the maternal as a body that creates and malforms the unusual body within her.

A monstrosity [*teras*] belongs to the class of things contrary to nature [*para physin*], although it is not contrary to nature in its entirety but only to nature as it holds for the most part. [...] it seems less of a monstrosity [*teras*], because even that which is contrary to nature [*para physin*] is, in a way, in accordance with nature [*kata physin*] (i.e., whenever the formal nature does not master the material nature).²⁷⁰

The monster in this sense, formed as a result of woman's body not mastering the material nature of the body, goes against formal nature, the usual mimetic aspect of nature that reinforces the woman as the double of the Same. The monster in this way subverts the mimetic in the maternal. Moreover, countering Aristotle's construction of the world in nature and artifice, Haraway reminds us that 'the world is not raw material for humanization'.²⁷¹ I am not attempting to construct a material representation that is analogous to a womb that contains monsters. I am attempting to compose representations of the pre-symbolic maternal-feminine through props that gesture her in the tangible, to structure participants' interactions through processual, albeit immaterial, exchanges, as a way of situating perception in terms of the feminine negative.

²⁶⁸ Shelley, M. *Frankenstein*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (1998).

²⁶⁹ 'Why should we not admit our hybrid identity and enjoy what Donna Haraway has called 'the promise of monsters' (Haraway 1992), the potential monsters have for creating embodied and never unambiguous sites for displacing and transforming actions on many levels?' Lykke, N. *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*. In: Lykke, N. & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*. London: Zed Books, (1996), p.17.

²⁷⁰ Schiefky, M. J. *Art and Nature in Ancient Mechanics*. In: Bensaude-Vincent, B. & Newman, W. R. (eds.) *The Artificial and the Natural*. Cambridge: MIT Press, (2007), p. 76.

²⁷¹ Haraway, D. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. London: Free Associations Books, (1991) p. 198.



Fig. xxxix. Foetus Prop (Photograph)

The foetus-like prop was developed alongside my own reflections on the notion of the intrauterine (within the uterus) vision, which is an active part in Surrealist reflections²⁷² concerning subjectivity and art. Intrauterine vision implies a notion of seeing back to a subject-less state, of seeing without subjectivity. The abstracted prop was developed from an amplified abstracted version of a zygote, one of the developmental stages of the foetus. A symbol of the body in the intermediary stages of development, in between monstrous and normal body, outlining my concern with the maternal and vestments of familiarity with the unclean abortive body in relation to the theory of abjection. This also concerns the body's borders, the passage between the interior/exterior of the woman's body, which becomes confused and not as defined at the woman's bodily orifices. The interior/exterior landscape in Irigaray's interpretation of woman is in a constant process of *self-touching*.²⁷³ I began to query how to

²⁷² Foster, H. *Compulsive Beauty*. London: MIT Press, (1993).

²⁷³ 'The hands joined, palms together, fingers outstretched, constitute a very particular touching. A gesture often reserved for women (at least in the West) and which evokes, doubles, the touching of the lips silently applied upon one another. A touching more intimate than that of one hand taking hold of the other'. Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p.135.

represent this process of self-touching through the props' aesthetics, to provoke participants into interacting with the props in order to structure the installation through tangible perception, instead of regarding the installation in the register of gazing.

I want a tension to arise in participants' encounter with the monstrous props in the scaffolding-area and for this process to be somehow conveyed on the screen; to note the difference between these two modes of representation of the maternal-feminine in the scaffolding-area and on-screen. I aim to maintain the two sites as different, not only in terms of the scaffolding-area's and screen's formal qualities but also in terms of the production, representation and reception of their content. The aim being to avoid replicating the representation of the feminine in either site in the installation. Each site should provide a way to transform the other's representation through a process of fragmentation and disruption as a possible process of feminised spatiality. If the props are perfectly rendered on-screen as representations of the maternal-feminine, the transfer from object representing the maternal-feminine to image representing the maternal-feminine through the camera's capture might simply construct the installation as a site for capturing and illustrating her image on the level of (masculine:) visible intelligibility on-screen rather than (feminine:) sensible perceptibility. The position of the camera in *Diagram 2* could situate the representation of the maternal-feminine as captured image and replicable appearance, structuring the installation through the logic of sameness and the (male) gaze, as opposed to accentuating sexuate difference in her representation through a different entry into perception. In the next section I focus on the problematic situation of the camera in *Diagram 2* in order to address the issues outlined here.

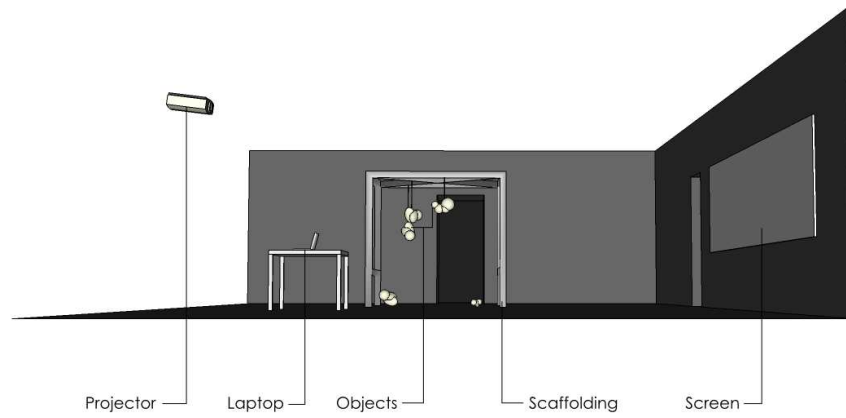


Fig. I. *Diagram 2* (orientation 2)

Reorientating the Camera

This section attempts to reorientate the proposed situation of the camera described in *Diagram 2*. I propose how the camera might be reorientated in relation to the contents of the installation with the intent to incite inter-relational exchanges between the props and participants without separating the camera from these. I align the concept of the maternal-feminine with the ontological structure of the surveillance apparatus towards figuring their shared capacities to foresee. I question the possibilities of different perspectival positions through querying the structure of the (male) gaze. This section attempts to resituate and reorientate the potentially positional, yet fragmented, perspectives that might be challenged and/or appropriated by participants between the two sites (scaffolding-area and the screen) in the installation.

Perhaps the camera's power over the participants in *Diagram 2* could be addressed through instrumentalising the situation of the props? Perhaps the foetus prop could indicate a subject without vision, to possibly represent seeing back to a subject-less state, like seeing from the position of the feminine negative. I imagine that by representing the foetus-like prop outside the maternal body could be a way to represent the foetus prop's own perspective. I imagine that by giving the foetus an eye to register the maternal-feminine in the negative could be a way of representing (monstrous) intrauterine vision. 'Vision is always a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?'²⁷⁴ I think that in this statement Haraway inadvertently implies an enfleshing of vision in terms of the maternal-feminine. I decided to strap a miniature surveillance camera onto the foetus prop to somehow represent the enfleshing of vision (refer to *Diagram X*). A miniature surveillance camera has been chosen in order for its size to be relative to the scale of the foetus prop.

²⁷⁴ Haraway, D. *Simians, Cyborgs & Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991) p. 192.

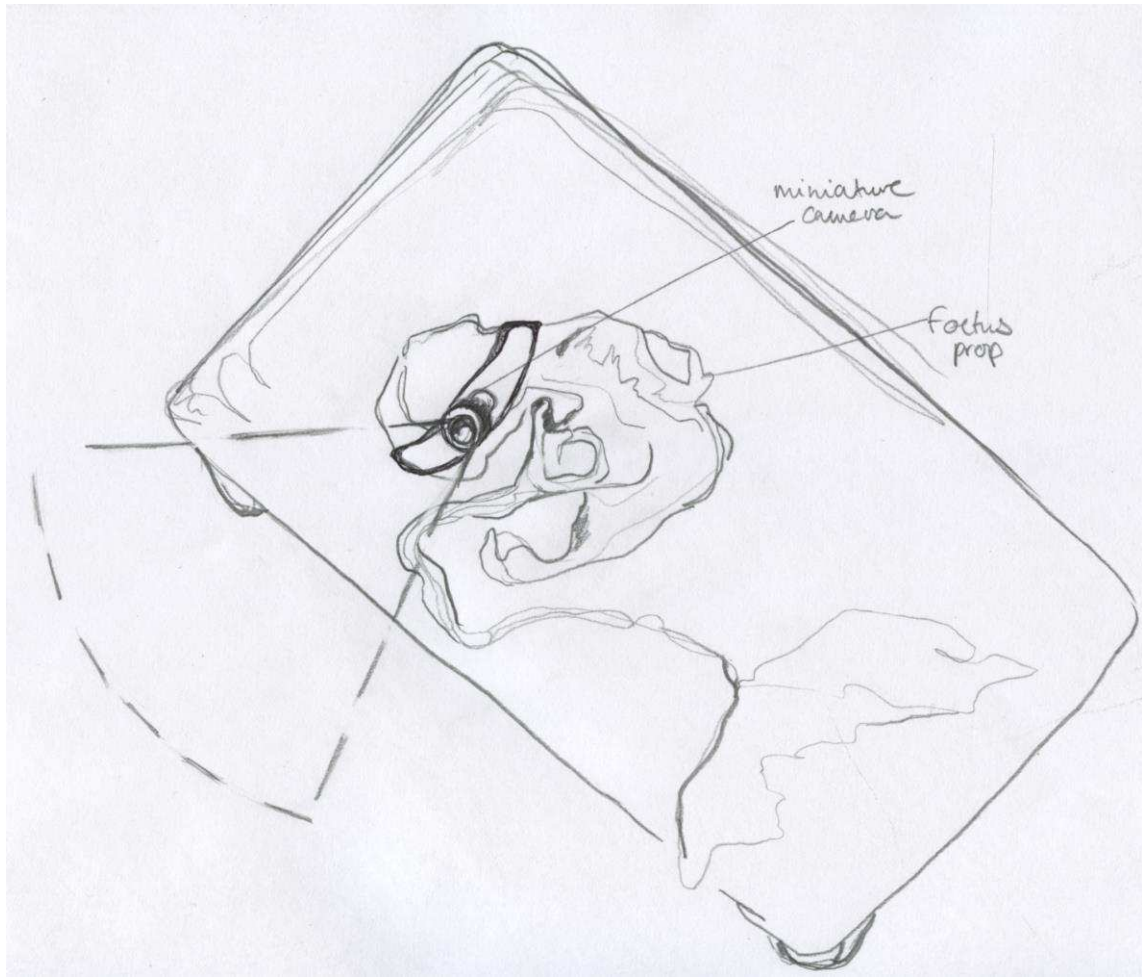


Fig. li. *Diagram X: detail*

Perhaps the relation between the prop and the camera could represent a form of maternal-feminine foreseeing, especially considering that surveillance apparatus also has tendencies to foresee. In the section *Surveillance Apparatus* I discussed surveillance as forecasting the site/sight of criminal activity. I also discussed how the surveillance camera could be seen to represent a process of foreseeing between two sets of eyes which are at a distance from each other, the remote watcher's eyes and the non-human eye of the camera.²⁷⁵ I think that the maternal-feminine bears a similar structure to surveillance apparatus. According to Irigaray, the maternal-feminine is structured as a clairvoyant body that envisions, because it is a body that potentially has more than one set of

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

eyes, the eyes of the mother and potentially the eyes of the pre-nascent body within her (the fetus).²⁷⁶ I imagine that by constructing this somewhat awkward alliance between the miniature surveillance camera and the maternal-feminine fetus prop I could situate the surveillance apparatus differently, with regard to the logic of a phalloculocentric gaze. I think that by making the miniature surveillance camera the fetus prop's prosthetic eye the installation could reference a feminine form of perception.

Participants could track the whereabouts of the miniature camera through the screen, orientating themselves through the fetus camera prop's perspective. This could mean that the representation of the fetus camera prop might be partially encountered, and therefore fragmented through the participants' reception: by encountering it in the scaffolding-area as an object, and again, though differently, from the prop's perspective on-screen. This relation between the two different representations in the two different sites could fragment participants' and audiences' phalloculocentric gaze through the perception and representation of the maternal-feminine. The fetus camera prop (representing the maternal-feminine) would not be represented holistically across the two sites (scaffolding-area and screen). Rather, perhaps it would be structured and encountered in two different sites through two different perspectives in a fragmented way.

The relation between the fetus camera prop and its perspective on the screen could make participant interaction redundant. However, by excluding participant interaction I think that a phalloculocentric mode of audience reception could persist because of the fetus camera prop's situation in the scaffolding-area and its on-screen perspective. Although the image on-screen and the fetus camera prop's representation would be maintained differently in the two sites without the aid of participant interaction, the two sites would remain essentially immobile. The fetus camera prop would be fixed as object (prop) and simultaneously maintained as image (figured from the prop's perspective),

²⁷⁶ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004).

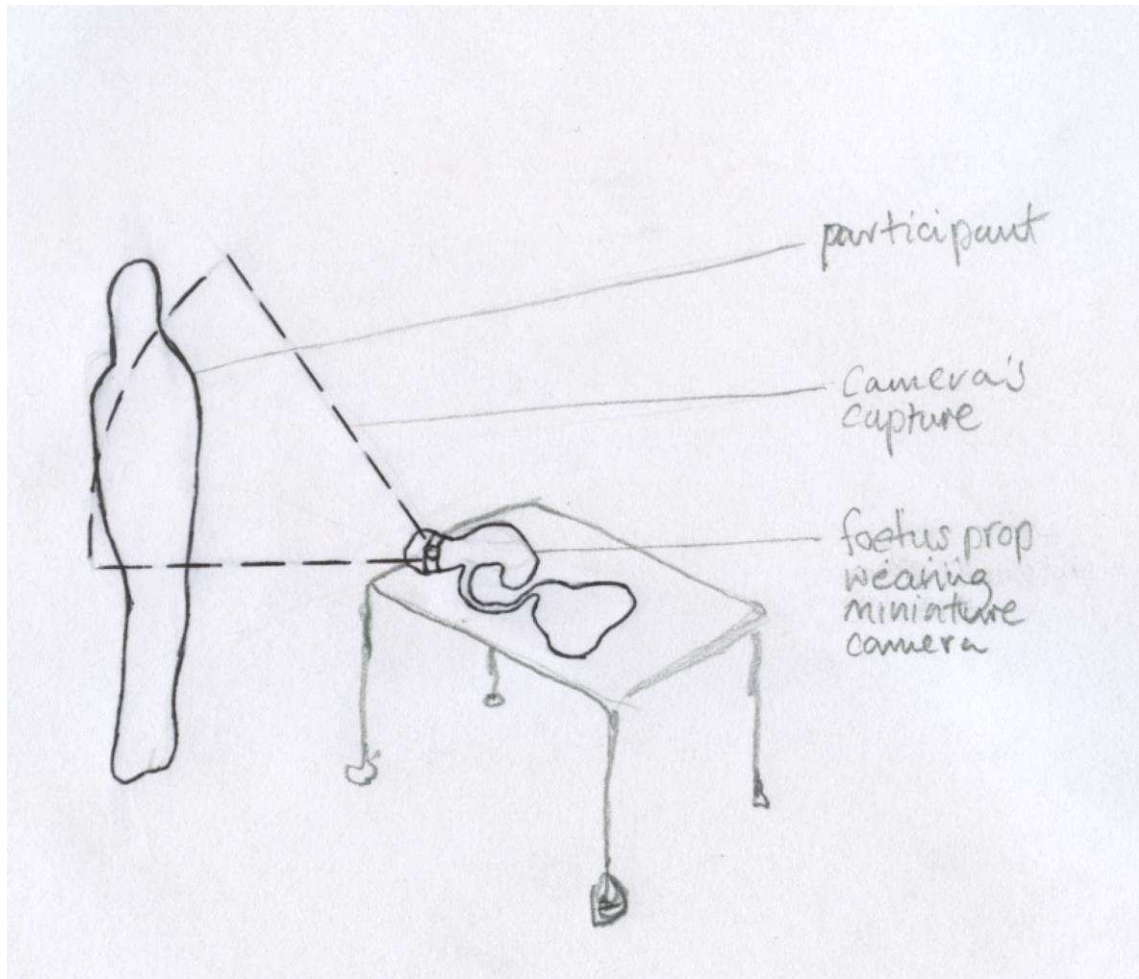


Fig. Iii. *Diagram X*

which would be structured, ordered and directed through my perspective and agency as artist, rather than by the processual exchange between the participants and the contents of the installation. However, participants could potentially mobilise the space by interacting with and moving the contents, thus directing and orientating the installation through their perspectives. I think that participant interaction is vital, as this could constitute the installation as a responsive site through inter-relational exchanges.

Facing the problem of participants interaction (or probable lack thereof) I was again led to consider the position of the camera on the fetus. I think that in the proposed set-up it could, in some ways, replicate the problems found in *Diagram 2*, regarding the position of the camera. The camera on the fetus

could control and dominate the participants and their relations to the installation's contents by overseeing the scaffolding-area (albeit from the fetus prop's position). In this relation the camera would not be immediately visible because it would be smaller than the camera proposed in *Diagram 2*. The miniature camera would be hidden on the fetus prop, potentially reifying the structure of the voyeur's hidden gaze.²⁷⁷ As Lacan states: 'although [... Sartre's] analysis brings out the agency of the gaze, it is not at the level of the other whose gaze surprises the subject looking through the keyhole. It is that the other surprises him, the subject, as entirely hidden gaze'.²⁷⁸ I think that the camera in this proposed scenario could effectively represent the keyhole in Sartre's model of the look, representing the apparatus through which the scene is observed on- screen.

However, the position of the voyeur could be reversed in the camera's new relation to the prop. If the participants discover the hidden gaze of the fetus camera prop and decide to pick up and orientate the fetus camera prop, the prop's capture of the participants could switch to represent the participants' viewing position on-screen. The participants would be in control of orientating the prop's perspective. The moment the participants discover the location of the gaze received by the audience, the participants' status would potentially shift from being the object of observation, as the exhibitionist, to being the observer, the voyeur, in the installation. I think that this could challenge the construction of (male) voyeurism by having the exhibitionist (the fantasised lacking woman in Lacan's model) look back at him through the keyhole. By this I mean that the participants could have the power to look back at the audience.

However, perhaps this proposition poses too high a demand on participants' interaction. The arrangement of the contents itself would not guarantee that the participants would interact with the fetus camera prop. Before finding the prop, discerning the camera, and its image production, and

²⁷⁷ Lacan, J. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (1979), p. 182.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

electing whether or not to manipulate the fetus camera prop, participants would already have been captured as image/object par excellence by the surveillance apparatus on the prop. I imagine that this uneven power relation between the fetus camera prop and participants would inevitably inform how the participants could encounter and interact with the prop. The prop in this arrangement would encounter the participants before the participants could encounter it.

Rather than creating a tension in participants' interaction, between attraction and repulsion, the risk of simply repelling participants' interaction is perhaps doubled by coupling the monstrousness of the fetus prop with the covert capture of the miniature surveillance camera strapped to it. How could the fetus camera prop attract participant interaction further? I think that my proposition to invite participants to move, touch and to reorientate the prop's viewing perspective needs to be implicitly indicated through the very mode of interaction itself in the installation. Perhaps the participants' bodies need to somehow reflect the body of the props?

Interactive Video Arts Practices

This section addresses concerns regarding the situation of the camera in the installation, in an attempt to move beyond hegemonic vision as structured in *Diagram 2* and towards the camera's new figuration with the fetus prop as proposed in the previous section (*Reorientating the Camera*). In this section I question the relation between participation and the video apparatus through specific artworks, so as to question how I might situate the camera in the installation beyond a phalloculocentric mode of gazing. I analyse different artworks in order to recompose the design of my installation with a view to:

- avoiding the potential capture of participants by the camera;
- to counter the hidden gaze of the camera/audience;
- and to offset the fixed and unified perspective of the (male) gaze by the camera/audience of the participants/spaces of the installation.

For these reasons, the question of arts practices concerning interactive technologies arose. Roy Ascott's conception of *Telematic Art* concerns artworks that comprise technological interfaces for participant interaction.²⁷⁹ He coined this term in the 1960's. The issue of how technology and participation interact through these kinds of arts practices bears a direct relationship with my practice. In the previous diagrams the participants would not affect the technological interface, their interaction would not mediate the production of images. In this section I analyse how participants/audiences might affect processes of imaging in the technological apparatus. There are also conceptual similarities between *Telematic Art* and my research; a shared concern being the critique of effects of participant interaction with technology in the context of video and imaging.

²⁷⁹ 'Telematic art encompasses a wide array of media: hypermedia, videotext, telefacsimile, interactive video, computer animation and simulation, teleconferencing, text exchange, image transfer, sound synthesis, telemetry and remote sensing, virtual space, cybernetic structures, and intelligent architecture'. Ascot, R. Is There Love in the Telematic Embrace? In: *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, (2003), p. 237.

Telematic Art is predicated on the 'birth of the reader',²⁸⁰ meaning that the participant takes precedence over the artist and production of the artwork.

Instead of the artwork as a window onto a composed, resolved, and ordered reality, we have at the interface a doorway to undecidability, a data space of semantic and material potentiality. The focus of the aesthetics shifts from the observed object to participating subject, from the analysis of observed systems to the (second-order) cybernetics of observing systems: the canon of the immaterial and participatory. Thus, at the interface to telematic systems, content is created rather than received.²⁸¹

However, my approach sets out with the intent to de-centre the (male) gaze in an audience's reception. My project is not tackling the question of global interfaces exchanging and interconnected through the electronic ether as pursued by Ascot. I am concerned with questioning the lack of position that the maternal-feminine holds in a phallogocentric mode of representation, through my installation and performance based arts practice I propose to offer an alternative gyneacentric perspective.²⁸² Though I do not situate my practice as a *Telematic Art's* practice, I think it is useful to address some of the issues of visuality problematised in *Telematic Art*. In this section I analyse *Lynching of Leo Frank* by Oliver Lutz, which concerns surveillance technologies and participation.²⁸³ I also analyse Paul Sermon's piece *Telematic Dreaming*, as a lever to further analyse the difference between my practice's and *Telematic Art's* approach. I conclude this section by analysing Nam June Paik's piece *TV Bra for living sculpture (with Charlotte Moorman)*, to inform my approach to designing the installation.

Oliver Lutz, *Lynching of Leo Frank* (2010)

Oliver Lutz' piece *Lynching of Leo Frank* comprises an infra-red surveillance camera that films a black canvas depicting a painting of the *Lynching of Leo*

²⁸⁰ Barthes, R. Death of the Author. In: Aspen, No. 5-6, (1967).

²⁸¹ Ascot, R. Is There Love in the Telematic Embrace? In: *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, (2003), p. 237.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid. see also: Phillips, S. S. (ed.) *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera*. London: Tate Publishing, (2010).

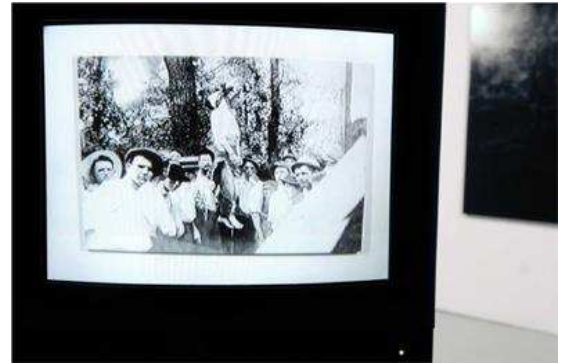
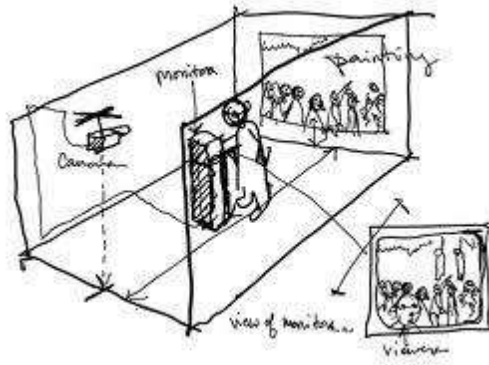


Fig. liii. Oliver Lutz, *Inst_lynching-diagram*, (2010)
 Fig. liv. O. Lutz, *The Lynching of Leo Frank*, (2010)

Frank, this can only be discerned by viewing the painting through infra-red. The infra-red surveillance camera reads the image. The camera is attached to the wall opposite the black canvas and its live video-feed is displayed on a monitor. The monitor is situated on a plinth in the centre of the room and faces the black canvas in the centre of the room. The viewer (as can be seen from Lutz' diagram) enters into the space between the monitor and the black canvas, walking between what is visible and invisible.

Although the painting of the *Lynching of Leo Frank* is not visible on the canvas and is not discernable through human eyesight, the image is revealed through the apparatus – the infra-red camera makes the image visible on the monitor. The piece seems to be centred on visual trickery, the camera is in this sense the decoder and interpreter of the scene, the apparatus enhances the visual and supposedly improves seeing for the viewer. The camera is the interlocutor between the viewer and the painted canvas that reveals the image that is black to the viewer's gaze. The register of visibility (camera and monitor) and invisibility (black canvas) situates the viewer between these. In this way the apparatus organises their position for reception. The viewer pieces together the artwork, seeing it within the apparatus. The surveillance equipment is all-seeing, it is the medium communicating between the site of the canvas and the monitor, revealing the deception at work. The viewer is captured live on the monitor, at once imaged with the real painting. Perhaps the truth of the image is located on-

screen. Its fallacy is that there is 'nothing to see'.²⁸⁴ In the *Lynching of Leo Frank* the apparatus reveals the true image. The image is dependent on technological processing to be *seen*, through this relation perhaps the camera is the real potent perceiver of the painting and its audience, as it captures, reveals and displays them together on the monitor's screen.

My installation is not trying to situate the camera above the participants' or audience's level of perception. I imagine that the camera would be the interlocutor only in so far as it would image the scene. My installation concerns the mobility of participation, to image the props and to displace the scene between the scaffolding-area and the screen. The participants would be discernable in both sites, the site where they might interact with the props and the images on the screen. However, Lutz and I do share some common concerns, these being the attempt to reveal the workings of the surveillance apparatus in the artwork and addressing the issue of othering through the apparatus. In Lutz' case: the othering of Jewish people; and within my practice: the othering of woman. However, these forms of othering are significantly different. Lutz' phallogocentric project aims to copy the image, to complete, reveal, and to make it intelligible (to reveal perhaps the injustice suffered by Frank). My piece aims to fragment, displace and make the image perceptible to order the scene in the register of the feminine.

Paul Sermon, *Telematic Dreaming* (1992)

In Paul Sermon's *Telematic* artwork, *Telematic Dreaming*, the effect the viewer has on the image is of greater importance than in *Lynching of Leo Frank*. Moreover, the viewer partakes in the construction of the image/artwork through their participation. *Telematic Dreaming* is comprised of a video conferencing system linking two different galleries. A projector is situated above a bed in a dark room in one gallery, whilst monitors surround a bed in an illuminated room

²⁸⁴ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988), pp. 30 – 31.



Fig. Iv. Paul Sermon, *Telematic Dreaming*, (1992)²⁸⁵

in another gallery. The gallery rooms are linked by live digital video feeds. In the dark room the projector projects the scene of the opposite gallery's bed onto its bed, the camera situated beside the projector in the dark room sends the images of its bed to the other gallery, to the illuminated room's monitors which surround the bed. Participants lay on the bed and respond to and interact with an image of the person lying on the bed in the opposite gallery (through the monitor screens or a projection). Participants interact with each other through different representations of each other in a different location in real time. Though participants meet by interacting with each other's projection and monitor screen images, effecting the construction of the piece, the site of interaction is mediated by the distance between the two sites. Meeting the other participant in the digital imaging process, the interaction is not an embodied exchange, but only realised within the apparatus. Though dreamy and outer-worldly, when the participants attempt to touch each other, they find that there is nothing to touch. Furthermore, in the dark room the projection could move over the body and image the other participant over them, so that they would not be *visible* and could not exchange in a sensible way. Rather their encounter could be interpreted as maintaining a phallogocentric logic.

My concern here is that through the process of participants' encounter in the technological imaging apparatus, the participants have limited agency in the production of the image. The two gallery sites are not proximal, meaning that there is limited visibility and participants can only affect the image and not the

²⁸⁵Telematic Dreaming was originally produced as a commission for the annual summer exhibition curated by the Finnish Ministry of Culture in Kajaani, with support from Telecom Finland, in June 1992. <http://creativetechnology.salford.ac.uk/paulsermon/dream/> (accessed: 01/09/10).

apparatus or locations that drive the images' productions. I think that these limitations in participant interaction maintain *Telematic Dreaming* in the logic of imaging (phantasmagoric) appearances in the obscenity of the visual. As Baudrillard explains, contemporary (digital) images are consumed as explicit, pornographic appearances, because they are reproduced in excess and so can only sustain, at best, the image as a fleeting surface.²⁸⁶

The apparatus in *Telematic Dreaming*, similarly to Lutz' visual trickery, is a conjurer that is invisible in terms of its *mechanism*; the link between galleries is only discernable through its output: through the projection on the bed in one gallery and the monitors that surround the bed in another gallery. However, a concern with displacing two sites seems to be a common thread between Lutz' and Sermon's work. Sermon is concerned with encounters separated by location, encounters that occur between strangers and arise in the form of appearances in the digital apparatus; whereas Lutz is concerned with the image's appearance in the digital apparatus. I would like to situate my approach between these two artworks' sensibilities. As I imagine that the installation in the nightclub may not be expressly maintained inside or outside the digital apparatus, but might perhaps be situated somewhere between these.

Though I am interested in the participants meeting through the surveillance apparatus on-screen in my installation, the participants will not be separated from each other in the scaffolding-area. I imagine that they might interact with the props and perhaps each other and on-screen. The aim being to avoid subjecting the participants to the camera's capture, so as to curb the containment of figuration of participants interactions through the image making apparatus. I think that the video apparatus should not be the only vehicle through which to encounter and interact with the installation in the nightclub. Rather than separating the sites and apparatus that construct the artwork, as is the case in *Telematic Dreaming* (two galleries linked through the video conferencing system), I imagine that the two different scenes in my installation

²⁸⁶ Baudrillard, J. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. New York: Semiotext(e), (1988).

could be composed together. As opposed to the *Lynching of Leo Frank* in which the site is split between the canvas, the camera and the monitor; my piece will not be attempting to hold the screen as the real, legible image, or pertaining to reveal the truth of the image on-screen (as is the case in *Lynching of Leo Frank*). My plans for the installation concern the representation of the maternal-feminine in the negative through a process of on-screen imaging by participants to question how their gaze might be de-centred/deformed. *Diagram 2* proposes that the capture of the scaffolding-area by the camera would be projected onto a screen, which suggests that these two modes of representation would be maintained together. I imagine that this concurrent process of representation would not arise through a literal duplication of sites, which would replicate the same image over another image, or reveal the real image, but might provide a way for each site to co-produce the other whilst representing each other differently.

Nam June Paik, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1975)

Conflating the viewing site and the live-feed of the apparatus through performance, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* by Nam June Paik, brings together different aspects of interaction. In *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* Charlotte Moorman plays the cello wearing a bra that comprises of two monitors connected to a live camera feed that captures the audience, whereby the audience is explicitly acknowledged. When the audience looks at the monitors covering her breasts they encounter themselves looking. Though the space is distinguished between performer and audience, the distance seems to be closed through the circuitous process of watching, as the gaze is returned between performer, apparatus and audience. Although the *Living Sculpture* is Moorman – and she is objectified as a nude, participating in the (male) gaze, the gaze is subverted, as the breasts (the site of interest) become prosthetic eyes that look back at the audience. In this relation, the audience (the voyeurs)



Fig. Ivi. Nam June Paik, *TV bra for Living Sculpture*, with Charlotte Moorman, (1975)

encounter themselves on the surface of the body of the exhibitionist as a mirror. I think that this can be interpreted as the site/sight of the breasts being taken over by a technological mirror that throws the audience's gaze back at them. In this way, the two sites, in Paik's artwork, could be seen as collapsed between audience, performer and apparatus; even though the distinction between the sites is maintained. I will attempt to establish this sensibility in my installation by distinguishing the screen from the site for the props, to maintain them as different sites which inform each other, so that this might afford inter-relational exchanges between the installation's contents, moreover, between the two sites.

I think that the situation of the miniature monitors over Moorman's breasts also raises a different and important issue in terms of how surveillance apparatus might relate to the body. Although the monitors act as mirrors, mirroring the audience's look, I do not think that this necessarily empowers Moorman. Even though the look is thrown back at the audience, the fact that it mirrors their look still maintains the audience at the centre of their own look, absenting the potential for her look, her body becomes a pure *screen* in this relation. I want the relation between the participants and the apparatus to empower the participants' viewing position and their perspective, so as not to construct them through a passive position or to objectify them (as Moorman in *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*), or to obscure them further. I am not only

concerned with empowering the image of the feminine in my artworks but also with creating a process of inter-relationality which breaks down the power relations between the one that gazes and the one who is gazed at. In *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* there could be an imbalance of power between these positions of gazing and receiving the gaze because the audience might not see their own image in Moorman's bra screens, as the image could be too small, rendering the suggestion that the screens potentially throw the audience's gaze back at them a token gesture which is not fully realised in the artwork. I think that the audience's look is maintained in this relation because of the empty threat posed by the miniature monitor screens.

I think however, that the miniaturisation of the screens in *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* clearly accentuates the importance of surveillance apparatus' portability. In Ascot's words: 'cybernetics will have come of age when we no longer notice the hardware, where the interface is minimal. Same goes for art?'²⁸⁷ Miniaturisation of the surveillance apparatus makes it part of the fabric of the in/visible, an apparatus constructed for the purpose of remote watching. Going against Ascot's utopian vision, my artwork attempts to make the processes of the surveillance apparatus' design for invisibility perceivable to participants and audience alike, to demystify a representation of the feminine.

Considering the different ways in which the artworks discussed here compose a relation between the participant/audience and the video apparatus the following section takes up this issue by focussing on the representation of the (maternal-) feminine negative. I develop my proposition for a method of feminised cartography in the thesis by analysing Mona Hatoum's video artwork *Measures of Distance*. This analysis in the next section broadens the questions laid out here (especially in relation to June-Paik's artwork), by exploring how to compose a process of feminised spatiality for audience reception. This is explored through correlating Edward Said's theory of *exilic perception* in relation to Irigaray's theory of the feminine masquerade, to investigate how a

²⁸⁷ Ascot, R. Behaviourables and Futuribles. In: *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, (2003), p.158.

phallogulocentric reading of a representation of the (maternal-) feminine might be deformed in an audience's reception of an on-screen image as a potentially double subjective process of space and time.

Measures of Distance: the feminine and the oriental



Fig. Ivii. Mona Hatoum, *Measures of Distance* (Video Still), 1988

In this section I interpret Mona Hatoum's video artwork *Measures of Distance* through a thematic schema of dislocation of exilic and feminine subjectivity by aligning Edward Said's and Irigaray's theorising on the negative. Whilst both Said and Irigaray critique the construction of the oriental and the feminine as negative versions of the proper subject, occidental/Western/man, I suggest that they both subvert this construction by re-appropriating and empowering the negative as a potentially active subjective process that comprises of a double spatiality and temporality. In a broader sense, I present the correlation between my interpretation of *exilic perception* and the feminine negative to further contextualise the cartographic method employed in the thesis' exploration of different diagrams' propositions for the representation of the feminine in the installation in the nightclub. Through an analysis of Hatoum's video and its reception this section addresses the central research question, by asking: how

might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phalloculocentric reading of an artwork?

Charting a possible dislocation of the negative from the dominant paradigm's (occidental/Western/man) phalloculocentric system of representation I analyse how Hatoum's video might relocate the feminine/oriental as an active process of excess and tactility, through a feminised cartographic method. I propose that a phalloculocentric reading of, listening to, and gazing at the feminine might be de-centered in an audience's reception of the *Measures of Distance* because of its disruptive syntactical representation of the feminine. I propose that this occurs because of the way in which the audio, text and images are overlaid in the video. I interpret the deformation of a phalloculocentric representation in *Measures of Distance* through the body of the mother as a referent that potentially orientates an interiorised interpretation of the (maternal-) feminine from a gyneacentric perspective in an audience's reception. I approach the representation of the mother in the video, as a boundary body/subjectivity, as a process of loss and disconnect, because of the way in which her body stands in for an infant's exile. Due to the ensuing separation between mother and child, I propose that the mother/exile references what falls beyond a binarised reading and represents, a double site of feminised space and time.

Cartographic Method: the feminine & orient/exile/other

In this subsection I align the feminine and the oriental other as potentially negative maps which correlate with each other. These are brought together to frame the theoretical approach in my analysis of *Measures of Distance*. In addition, they further contextualise the feminised method which is being used in this research, namely the proposed feminised diagrammatical composition of *(f)low visibility's* design. This is discussed here as a potentially cartographic composition of feminine interiority from a gyneacentric perspective. The image of the feminine negative is constructed under the capture and possession of the (male) gaze. Constructed as a representation of male desire she poses and

anticipates what the (male) gaze wants to see and to know. I propose that the colonisation of the feminine body by the (male) gaze is perhaps analogous to Said's analysis of colonial cartographical representation of a subject/country possessed and captured. Said identifies this procedure as follows,

And then you look back in the history of colonialism, you look at India: the first thing they did was to draw maps – they sent surveyors out and they did surveys ... They transform the geography into their vision of what the geography should be... They rename it, they efface its history... So the drawing and redrawing of maps is the endless transformation not only of the land but also of the possession of the land.²⁸⁸

Said proposes the deconstruction of the role of oriental subjectivity as a negative version of the positive occidental/Western subject. Said theorises that the negative (oriental) subject is absented from the scene of subjectivity by the various ways in which the West institutes their capture and possession. The occidental, through colonisation, refigures the oriental other by taking the place of that other, through their land, body, and language. In this way the orient and oriental subject are remapped as a copy of the occident and occidental subject. Crucially, this mapping cannot contain the desires, body, language, culture of that (oriental) other because the dominant paradigm's (e.g. coloniser) version of these is already established as the original map of subjectivity. This process of absenting the (oriental) other occurs through the inscription of the master discourse, that being the coloniser's system of representation. Said explains the way in which the Western perspective anticipates and envisages and therefore structures the other as a false version of the West:

Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known, a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing [...] Islam is judged to be a fraudulent new version of some previous experience, in this case Christianity.²⁸⁹

Similarly, tracing the Judeo-Christian construction set-out in the story of Adam and Eve, woman is a copy of man, a copy of a previously known thing, her body is made from his body, which systematises the discourse and logic of the

²⁸⁸ Wagstaaf S. *Uncharted Territory: New Perspectives in the Art of Mona Hatoum*. (in) *Mona Hatoum: The Entire World as a Foreign Land*. (Director) Deuchar, S. London : Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd. (2000), p.39.

²⁸⁹ Said, E. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1985), p.58.

original as man. One could arguably say that the construction of the oppressed other, whether oriental other, or, woman as other, cannot be experienced in terms of their own subjectivities' specificities because they are figured through a dominant framework that structures them as a copy of the original, the dominant paradigm, the proper version of representation: man/occidental respectively. Being the original, the man/occidental enforces a representation of himself on the other. In Said's words, 'Europe could not stop the practice; the Orient and the Oriental, Arab, Islamic, Indian, Chinese, or whatever, become repetitious pseudo-incarnations of some great original (Christ, Europe, the West) they were supposed to have been imitating'.²⁹⁰ Perhaps this procedure of othering, and the subsequent fate of the negative subject as an imitator, as a copy of the original subject, could be interpreted as a consequence of enforcing the *Law of the Father*. In this way we might imagine the body of the feminine as colonised by the (male) gaze, whereby her body is constructed as a negative sign that represents his desires as a phallic cartography.²⁹¹

In my interpretation, the disavowal of her body, through constructing her as a phallic body, is the consequence of Freud's negative cartographic mapping of the feminine as the *dark continent* of sexuality. In this way, the oriental other and the feminine negative might be aligned with each other, as both are cartographically structured outside the dominant paradigm, as both are colonised, albeit through different means, both can be said to be subjugated by a dominating power/force. Perhaps, what lies outside Occidental man, is the unknown, the uncharted territory that is the body of woman and the exotic – as threatening terrain(s). Both might be said to be fetishised, disavowed, and remapped as a negative version of man/occidental in order to serve his desires and purposes.²⁹² In this way a parallel between the dark continent of sexuality

²⁹⁰ Said, E. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1985), p.62.

²⁹¹ Determining her in terms of what she is not, as a site of disavowal, her body is imaged as the phallus under the gaze to cope with castration anxiety. Perhaps the remapping of the feminine subjectivities' desire, body and representation through disavowal implicitly acknowledges her threat, moreover the excess of her unknowable subjectivity; in the same way in which the excess of the exotic poses a threat because it seems unknowable.

²⁹² Said explains the West's domination over the orient as a consequence of the threat of the unknown: 'The two aspects of the Orient that set it off from the West in this pair of plays [Aeschylus, *The Persians*

and the Orient might be drawn, because what is unknowable must therefore be disavowed, corrected and controlled.

Perhaps this might be taken into account as another aspect which informs my proposed feminised methodology in the thesis because in some ways I am attempting to map the space, time, language of, and relations to the feminine through the composition and recomposition of the diagrams of *(f)low visibility* in preparation for its reception. The aim of the diagrams is to reroute feminine interiority differently, not as a dark continent of sexuality that might be made visible and colonised by the (male) gaze, but, to provide an audience with an alternative cartographic experience of her; that is, an installation which partially maps her body, location, and inter-relational processes in terms of her own subjectivities' specificities. So the propositions for mapping a feminised process of referentiality are continually reorientated in the plans for *(f)low visibility*. In this way I propose that these different schemas and interpretations orientate a feminised method of spatiality in the thesis as a feminised cartographic process.

Analysis of video artwork *Measures of Distance*, by Mona Hatoum

There is a wealth of literature written on Mona Hatoum's artworks and experts who interpret her work, for example, Said and Guy Brett. These interpretations shape the language and conceptual tools with which Hatoum's artwork is usually understood, indeed they inform the way her work continues to be interpreted; moreover they structure the canon through which her work is encountered as a representation of the process of exile. By aligning Said with Irigaray here I emphasise a feminist interpretation of her work in conjunction

and the Bacchae of Euripides] will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between the two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant. Aeschylus represents Asia, makes her speak in the person of the aged Persian queen, Xerxes' mother. It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries.' Said, E. *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1985), p.57.



Fig. Iviii. Mona Hatoum, *Measures of Distance* (Video Still), 1988

with Marks'²⁹³ and Sheena Wagstaff's interpretations. Hatoum's artwork more often than not addresses themes of domesticity, which is usually interpreted through a lexicon of exile, dislocation and disconnect in terms of land, geography, colonisation, war, cultural difference, diasporas, displaced identity and home. These provide the contexts through which Hatoum's artworks are

²⁹³ Marks situates her interpretation of *Measures of Distance* through the relationship between mother and daughter, and interprets the memory of the mother through what she proposes is encountered by the viewer as a process of haptic visuality, whereby woman is encountered through touch rather than vision. Marks proposes that this process occurs because of the close up shots (and other disruptive qualities in the video imaging) that indicate a process of touching the mother. I argue against this reading further on in this section. 'There is the blurry, tactile image of the naked body of the artists' mother in Mona Hatoum's *Measures of Distance* (1988), as a voice-over speaks of her longing to press her faraway daughter close to her heart again [...] the artist, a woman, attempts to recreate an image of her mother that has been erased or blocked through some movement of cultural dislocation [...] she creates the new image from the memory of the sense of touch.' Marks, L.U. *The Skin of the Film*. Durham: Duke University Press. (2000), p. xi.

discussed, sometimes the theme of domesticity is interpreted as a negative body, as the absence of the body, though the shape and tone of that body is often neglected in interpretations. I propose that as her artworks concern domesticity and the body, that dislocation begins with being a *woman* in a home—‘diaspora begins at home’²⁹⁴— as the point from which the process of exile might be charted, which I interpret as representing a process of continual departure from the mother as the rubric of home. In Hatoum’s discussion of her artwork *Home* (1999) she says,

She chose the title [Home] ‘because I see it as a work that shatters notions of wholesomeness of the home environment, the household, and the domain where the feminine resides. Having always had an ambiguous relationship with notions of home, family and the nurturing that is expected out of this situation, I often like to introduce a physical or psychological disturbance to contradict those expectations... Being raised in a culture where women have to be taught the art of cooking as part of the process of being primed for marriage, I had an antagonistic attitude towards all of that.’²⁹⁵

In *Measures of Distance* the body of the mother is encountered through letters written in Arabic script that the mother has sent her daughter which are read out in English. These letters appear on-screen in the foreground, fading in and out of photographs (taken on Hatoum’s last visit to Beirut) of her mother in the shower. The sense of absence composed through letters by, and photographs of, her mother sets the exilic tone of the work in the register of the mother. Her mother elaborates her absence in a letter to Hatoum as follows, ‘I don’t know what you mean when you talk about a gap between us. You say you can’t remember that I was around when you were a child’.²⁹⁶ Further to this in Marks’ analysis of the relation between mother and daughter she says that,

In Hatoum’s *Measures of Distance*, as the grainy image gradually resolves into figuration, we realize that the stills are of a woman’s body, and that they are of the artist’s mother. This pulling-back powerfully evokes a child’s gradual realization of separateness from its mother, and the accompanying ability to recognize objects: to

²⁹⁴ Marks, L.U. *The Skin of the Film*. Durham: Duke University Press. (2000), p.238.

²⁹⁵ Wagstaff, S. *Uncharted Territory: New Perspectives in the Art of Mona Hatoum*. (in) *Mona Hatoum: the entire world as a foreign land*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing ltd. (2000). p.32.

²⁹⁶ Mona Hatoum *Measures of Distance* (1988). *Measures of Distance*. Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMAU2SfkXD0> (Accessed: 29/05/13).

recognize the mother's body as a separate body that is also desired by someone else.²⁹⁷

Hatoum's experience of separation from and absence of her mother seems to foreclose and indicate the ensuing separation from her land, language, and culture as an exile. Though the mother's and daughter's relation to each other is set at a distance and their connection is fragmented and disrupted, as the letters and images of the mother are composed in/from vastly different contexts (i.e. countries, cultures, generations, languages, and times). The letters and images seem to cultivate and foreground their intimacy and proximity, that is, the specificities of their sisterly bond.²⁹⁸ Hatoum's mother says, 'I enjoyed very much all those intimate conversations we had about woman's things and all that. You know, I have never talked in this way before; why don't you come and live here and we can make all the photographs and tapes you want.'²⁹⁹

In my interpretation, these acts (the letters and images) perform the growing inter-relationship between the mother and daughter, they acknowledge the cultivation of a new sexually different intimacy between them, which is pitted against the domination of the father, who declares the contents of the letters and the artwork as 'woman's nonsense'.³⁰⁰ Through the letters' internal reflexive dialogue the making process and the artwork's content is acknowledged, activating the scene of making in the viewers' experience of the artwork. I propose that *Measures of Distance* performs the act of the mother having photographs taken of her and of her writing letters in its reception as a feminised process. As these acts are repeated concurrently in the image, Arabic script and the voice reading the letters.

²⁹⁷ Marks, L.U. *The Skin of the Film*. Durham: Duke University Press. (2000), p.187.

²⁹⁸ Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008).

²⁹⁹ Mona Hatoum *Measures of Distance* (1988). *Measures of Distance*. Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMAU2SfkXD0> (Accessed: 29/05/13).

³⁰⁰ 'When you asked me questions about my sexuality, your father said "What's all this nonsense she's occupying her mind with?" I supposed he's wondering why you're not communicating with him in the same way. Afterall, you've always been your father's daughter and I remember that before you and I made those photographs and tapes together during your last visit your letters were always mainly addressing him. I suppose he still can't forgive you for taking those pictures of me in the shower. It's as if you had trespassed on his property. And now he feels that there is some weird exchanges going on between us, from which he is excluded. He calls it woman's nonsense.' Mona Hatoum *Measures of Distance* (1988). *Measures of Distance*. Available from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMAU2SfkXD0> (Accessed: 29/05/13).

The father seemingly disavows their intimacy, reprimanding them, he attempts to gain control of his property (the mother), and his system of representation. But the mother and daughter subvert this demand and reinforce their sisterly relation, undoing his power and domination over them by continuing to make the artwork and by denying him access to their relation. They cultivate a different space of exchange which is determined and composed by them, which could be interpreted as a feminised process:

You asked me in your last letter if you can use my pictures in your work. Go ahead and use them and don't mention a thing about it to your father. You remember how he was shocked when he caught us taking pictures in the shower during his afternoon nap. I suppose he was embarrassed to find us both standing there stark naked and we both just ignored him. We laughed at him, when he told us off – but he was seriously angry. He still nags me about it, as though I had given you something that belongs to him. I actually enjoyed this session because it felt like we were like sisters and with nothing to hide from each other.³⁰¹

The video's composition prevents his phalloculocentric system of representation (represented by the father's discourse) from unifying or controlling the text from within the artwork, effectively casting out the law of the father from the diegesis. Further to this, the phalloculocentric system of representation is perhaps deformed in an audience's reception through the artwork's feminised elaboration of what it is to be a potential mother and a woman who desires³⁰² (from a gyneacentric perspective):

I was only trying to console you because you were very upset at the site of the blood and you were crying very hard. If I remember well I said, 'you should consider yourself very lucky to be a woman. You only have to think about it once a month whereas men have to shave every day.' I suppose thinking about it now it's a strange way to describe the difference between men and women. I was only trying to cheer you up and make you feel good about being a woman.³⁰³

Perhaps mapping woman through these different embodied moments that are shared amongst women and dispersed through a recollection of memories, different places and times, composes the mother, from the perspective of (a woman) residing elsewhere, as a double subjectivity. Irigaray discusses the

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² 'Your last letter made me laugh a lot, I can't understand this expression 'lie back and think of England'. You mean they believe that women are not supposed to enjoy sex? Well, my answer to that is of course we do, as much as men, if not more.' Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

notion of double subjectivity as a way in which the feminine negatively occupies a double sense of time and space, in which the negative is not simply constructed as a negative reflection of male desire. In my interpretation of Irigaray's theorising, in the masquerade,³⁰⁴ the feminine's image is exteriorised under his gaze, yet she escapes towards her interior; this process of doubling then occurs concurrently in a movement between the interior and the exterior of a feminine subjectivity. I propose that this double subjectivity (simultaneously composed through multiple times and spaces) subverts the possibility of a (male) gaze from fixing, possessing and determining the feminine from a unitary perspective in *Measure's of Distance's* reception. This de-centering might be said to occur:

- within the narrative – prevention of the father's language, gaze and system of representation and domination;
- through the different references to the mother, represented through different times and places in the artwork's composition.

These different ways of referencing the dislocation of the feminine in the video seem to suggest a potential for a feminised form of reception by an audience as a process of diegetic, compositional and experiential de-centering. Similarly to Irigaray, this doubling subjective experience of time and space is proposed by Said through what he terms as exilic perception,

The exile knows that it is a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons... Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience... Seeing the whole world as a foreign land makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions.³⁰⁵

This double subjective process in Irigaray's and Said's theorising certainly arises differently, yet it might be posited that there is a shared sense of perception which is not unitary, or from a singular perspectival construction of vision/language – rather, a subject's (feminised and indeed, an oriental) process

³⁰⁴ The feminine mimes and performs his image of desire, there is a reserve, an elsewhere that she escapes to within herself.

³⁰⁵ Wagstaff, S. *Uncharted Territory: New Perspectives in the Art of Mona Hatoum*. (in) *Mona Hatoum: the entire world as a foreign land*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd. (2000). p.36.



Fig. lix. Mona Hatoum, *Measures of Distance* (Video Still), 1988

of perception can occur simultaneously in different places and times. However, what does this interpretation of *Measures of Distance* afford beyond acknowledging the coexistent settings³⁰⁶ and perceptions in the representation of the mother? Perhaps the feminised excess of meaning I am describing is experienced through the mother's representation between different bodies, borders, cultures and languages in the video. A process of representation that

³⁰⁶ Anneke Voohees says in line with Said, 'No longer settled, closed, and internally coherent, the domestic space is now porous, intersects with opposing states, and is continually unsettled. [...] Hatoum's video [Changing Parts], however, heightens our awareness of vision formed by two coexisting settings. Here, the space of refuge and the space of chaos are vivid, actual and occur together. They are at once familiar and strange locked together as an irreconcilable pair. To Edward Said, this simultaneity of vision is expressive of exilic perception. *Under Siege: Mona Hatoum's Art of Displacement*. Voohees, A. (in) *Visual Worlds*, (eds) Hall, J. R, Stimson, B, Becker, L. T. London: Routledge, (2005), p.232-233.

could be interpreted as dislocating the feminine from the binary (masculine/feminine) and composing her beyond a fixed location or time.³⁰⁷

Though the composition of the mother in *Measures of Distance* seems to be structured through images, text, and voices, in my interpretation this is not a semiotic/symbolic representation of woman. Rather, I propose that the feminisation of the piece is provoked through an embodied process that is dependent on negative space, because the mother is referenced in excess of what can be received by an audience. The mother's body is elaborated through the negative, her absence is marked by different references to her: in the shower, as a letter, and through the different voices. These different representations are overlaid. Together these reference her in different sensible registers in a discontinuous way. Through the slow paced accumulation of these referential markers I propose that perhaps a feminised cartographic experience gathers together without a clear perspectival view of woman in any one site or time in the video's composition. My point is that Hatoum's mother is not a sign to be read, her body is not a text.

But what might comprise/compose a sensible encounter in the video and how might it be registered as a feminised process? In Marks' interpretation of Hatoum's video, amongst other artists' artworks, she says that the body of woman is composed beyond the semiotic, saying that it calls 'upon tactile memory to create a communication between daughters and mothers that words, and audiovisual images cannot'.³⁰⁸ But how can a tactile experience of *Measures of Distance* be identified? For Marks this concerns the viewer's proximity to the image (through the close-up, graininess, etc., of an image), as that which affords a tactile experience of the image rather than a visual one. Because if a woman's body is represented in this disruptive way then it prevents

³⁰⁷ The way that I structured it is that it's based on a series of letters from my mother to myself. My mother still lives in Beirut, and ummm, me living in London and the sort of ummm, distance between us which was caused by the war in Lebanon and ah, although it's based on relationship between mother and daughter – it also speaks of loss, and a disorientation, and a, exile, and ummm, and it sort of becomes like ummm, a portrait of a person who's trying to make sense umm of the refractions of exile and displacement. Mona Hatoum interviewed by Gay Watson, *Measures of Distance*, Audio Arts Magazine, Volume 13, Number 4.

³⁰⁸ Marks, L.U. *The Skin of the Film*. Durham: Duke University Press. (2000), p. 113.

her body from becoming a set of objects, that is, fetishised by the (male) gaze. However, I think that touch could afford an audience with an experience of feminised spatiality in *Measures of Distance* precisely because of the processual *distancing* actioned through a method of disruption in its representation of the mother. How then might an embodied process of reception, of a representation of the feminine, be identified? And, how might this provide a potentially tactile experience of an artwork that represents woman at a distance?

Perhaps tactility might be experienced through the handwritten letters that compose the screen's surface, this being the most fore-grounded image in the work, the veil through which an audience encounters the mother's body in the shower. The mother emerges as a body marked by tactile and acoustic impressions of her own hand, as her body is enfolded between the Arabic text and the daughter's spoken English translation. This seems to represent a paced cartography of the mother and the tone of their relationship as an accumulation of these referential markers in the video's feminised spatial composition. The disjuncture between their contexts seems to be marked by the different sites in which the mother and the daughter encounter each other, the mother's letters are reflective and recollect memories and events of the past which respond to Hatoum's questions about being a woman and having a fragmented identity. Hatoum reads out these letters in English represented on-screen. Prior to these consecutive events (the writing and reading of the letters) there is the encounter between them, in which a conversation (in Arabic) and photographs taken of her mother in the shower took place. The conversation plays in the background of the video, becoming foregrounded in the pauses between the readings of her mother's correspondence. I think that these different sites of encounter are composed together, layered, so an audience experiences these different encounters at the same time and in the same space. I interpret this as setting up a double sense of feminised space and time. Composing the feminine as a doubling subjectivity, as a process of subjective multiplicity in accordance with Irigaray, and as a process of exilic perception in line with Said. I propose that

the letters set the tone of distance and dislocation through an embodied register as they are represented by Hatoum sounding out her mother's words in a different tongue. Hatoum embodies and repeats her mother through a linguistic disconnect which perhaps can only be partially understood as Arabic and English are orally/aurally overlaid. Her mother's body is experienced as a naked, or rather revealed body, and as a veiled body (Aletheia) as her image fades in and out of the letters. Her body seems to represent a *disruptive excess* which potentially falls outside of an audience's unifiable perspective as voices, sounds, images, languages are overlaid. I suggest that the representation of woman in *Measures of Distance* cannot be centered by an audience, or colonised by the (male) gaze. As her representation is dispersed across multifarious references that simultaneously elaborate different times, places and perspectives between mother and daughter I propose that *Measures of Distance* might be understood both compositionally and in its reception as a process of feminised spatiality.

How then, might (maternal-) feminine references be dispersed across the scene of the installation in the nightclub, *(f)low visibility*, so that the participants and audience might encounter her through a feminised process of temporality, spatiality and perception? The next part of the thesis, *Part 3*, attempts to address this question by recomposing *Diagram 2* through *Diagram 3*, in order to propose a way to reference the feminine negative through a process of multiplicity towards deforming the possibility of a phalloculocentric gaze of the video apparatus, participants and an audience.

Part 3: DIAGRAMS

Diagram 3

Part 3 of the thesis attempts to conclude the exploration of a potential form of feminisation of perception and spatiality in participants and audience reception of the installation in the nightclub. This section asks: how can I construct the relations between the props without reinforcing their representation on-screen as a phallogocentric project, without reducing the screen to a site/keyhole through which the contents of the scaffolding-area might be viewed by the audience/voyeur? How can I avoid situating the screen as an illustration of the scaffolding-area's contents as a representation of male desire? Indeed, how might the plans for a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phallogocentric reading of the installation in the nightclub? In the previous section: *Measures of Distance*, I propose that the multiplication of the references to the (maternal-) feminine in Hatoum's video might provide a way in which to de-centre the gaze of an audience. This section explores how this process of multiplicity might be activated in the composition of the installation through the technological apparatus' set-up, so that interaction in the installation might be approached as a potential for a feminised cartographic method of exploration.

I want participants to be active not passive, to interact with the props, to touch them and manipulate them in the installation. I want their participation to be registered as an embodied process of interaction which emerges in response to a (maternal-) feminine thematic. I want the process of participation to be feminised so that the images received by an audience might *actively* reference the feminine. Perhaps the issue in Hatoum's artwork lays in the passive way in which the viewer receives a representation of the (maternal-) feminine, because of the camera's/audience's centralised gaze. Therefore I ask: how can an active process of participation arise through *Diagram 2's* proposed composition for the installation, when participants could potentially be overseen by a camera and hence be reduced to a passive position by the camera's (male) gaze?

In this section I address this problem by proposing to make the camera visible to participants and audience alike. I consider the issues of visibility of the technological imaging apparatus (surveillance apparatus) discussed in the section *Interactive Video Arts Practices* and the problems of consent which ensue with regard to these kinds of apparatuses. I want to avoid simply hiding the camera on an inert non-human (foetus-like) prop, as discussed in the section *Reorientating the Camera*. Furthermore, reflecting on June-Paik's *TV Bra for Living Sculpture (with Charlotte Moorman)* I suggest how the plan for the installation might be radically altered through the camera's relation to the participants and audience. The plan for the installation is redesigned by exploring a way to dislocate the camera lens from the eyes of an audience. In *Part 3* I propose a new bodily relation to the camera; I begin to set this out in *Diagram 3*, so as to suggest how inter-relational exchanges might be propelled by the participants' agency and how interaction might be developed through *Diagram 3*'s design as a potential for a feminised cartographic method of exploration. I suggest that by providing a potential for a bodily relation to the camera a tangible form of feminised perception might be composed through interaction and reception of the props' and the apparatus, devising the installation as a potential process of feminised spatiality. Through my plan set out in *Diagram 3* for the set-up of *(f)low visibility*'s installation in the nightclub I propose to include several cameras in the installation, to situate them in various choice locations, in relation to the participants' bodies and the props. Through *Diagram 3*'s design this section explores how it might be possible to compose the installation as a feminised space and speculates on how an audience might receive this.

Diagram 1 maintains one-sided-watching, situating the audience as voyeur par excellence. *Diagram 2* proposed to resolve *Diagram 1*'s representation of the participant as exhibitionistic images for an audience's (male) gaze. This is suggested through opening up the spaces for audience and participants to watch from multiple perspectives, so as to afford inter-relationality between the different constituent parts of the installation. However, although *Diagram 2*

proposes viewing from multiple perspectives, the roles of a potential audience (non-participating viewer) and the participants remain distinctly different. *Diagram 2* seems to problematically propose to situate the participants as passive recipients of a passive representation of the feminine on-screen which risks situating participants as objects in the scene and constructing her image through the (male) gaze of the camera/audience. The participants' agency might not be foregrounded by the proposed composition of the installation in *Diagram 2*, meaning that participants might not be motivated to interact in the installation. They might be relegated to a situation of exhibitionistic spectacle. However, *Diagram 2's* proposition for opening up the scaffolding-area in relation to the screen could still afford multi-perspectival viewing positions and could potentially fragment the (male) gaze by keeping the two sites separate whilst making them both simultaneously available to participants and audience. I also think that framing multi-positional viewing relations between audience and participants could be problematic. It could limit the participants' and an audience's perception to a fundamentally geometral (perspectival) process of phallogocentric gazing rather than affording an encounter with the installation through a gynocentric process of inter-relationality.

Attempting to shift the spatial composition of the installation from the status of spectacle is a challenging task as the monstrous props partake in the discourse of spectacle – the 'Latin etymology of the term confirms it: *monster/monstrum* is primarily an object of display...Historically monsters have always been exhibited in public spaces'.³⁰⁹ *Diagram 2* seemed crucial in developing a proposed way to empower participants through potentially demystifying their interactions by opening out *Diagram 1's* design; although it risks displaying them and the props as monsters in a normative way. The two different areas in *Diagram 2* seem to suggest a potential for multi-perspectival viewing positions. However, these positions might remain unmarked because the participants could be figured passively by the active viewing perspectives

³⁰⁹ Braidotti, R. Signs of Wonder Traces of Doubt. In: Lykke N & Braidotti, R. (eds.) *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs*. London: Zed Books, (1996), p. 135.

and positions of the camera and the audience. Reflecting on Haraway's theory of *partiality*, these perspectives and exchanges would require acknowledging and establishing an affirmatory position for the participants to take up in the installation's composition, to prevent them from engaging passively with the installation. *Diagram 2's* design does not seem to propose to participants any apparent activity or mode of engagement that could be indicative of active interaction. In order for the participants not to be mediated as passive participants they would need to radically oppose the situation of the camera in *Diagram 2*. In my interpretation of Haraway's critique of vision, I think that *Diagram 2's* proposition runs the risk of performing the God-trick because of the camera's position. I want to avoid advocating 'ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively'.³¹⁰

Perhaps then, in order to depart entirely from *Diagram 2's* figuration, the participants should be in control of the camera? *Diagram 3* is designed in terms of this new relation to the camera. I imagine that giving a camera to the participants might not only put their agency into effect but could also actively acknowledge the camera's presence precisely as their mode of interaction. This could also be a way for participants to consent to a process of watching. This could potentially diminish my agency and power as artist and director of the installation, which could potentially empower the participants in the installation. I think that the participants' relation to the audience could also change. By giving the participants a camera they could counter their situation as spectacle – as exhibitionists – for the audience's (male) gaze. They could potentially point their camera at the audience. I think that this proposed new relation to the camera could organise participants' embodied viewing position actively,³¹¹ and could construct the installation as a site composed of partially located perceptions.

³¹⁰ Haraway, D. *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. In: *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, London: Free Associations Books, (1991), p. 191.

³¹¹ The reasons for situating the miniature surveillance camera in relation to the participants' body is fleshed out in the conclusion.

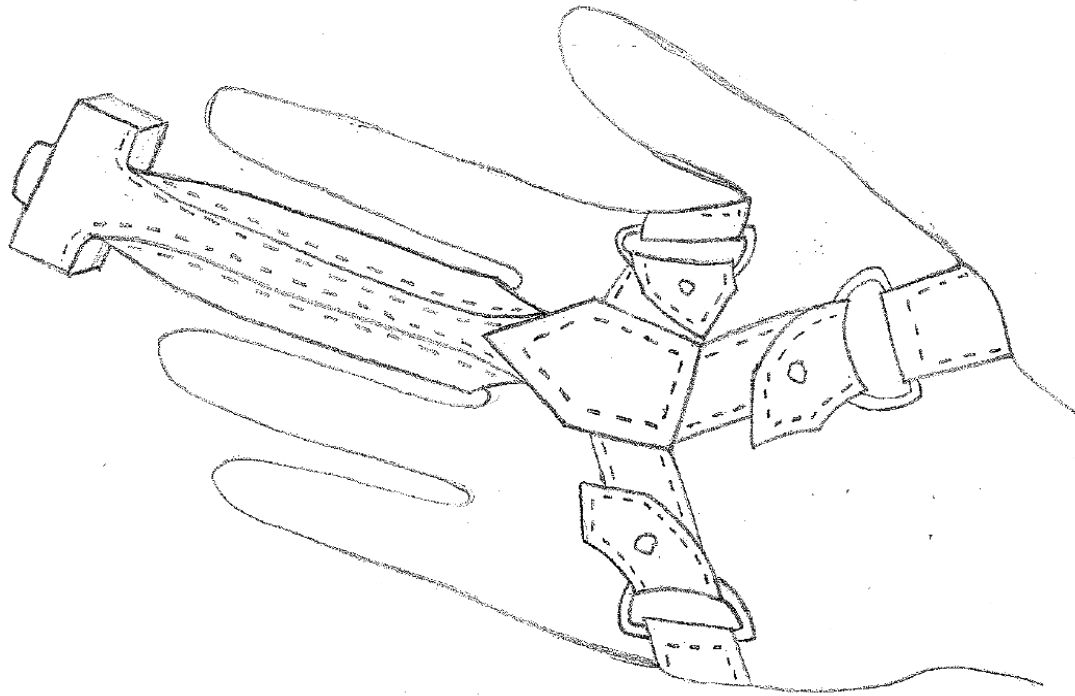


Fig. ix. Drawing (participant camera prosthesis)

I decided that attaching the cameras to the hands of the participants would be like a '*partial connection*' between (human) hands and (non-human) eyes.³¹² The notion of partiality could be seen as reflected in the design of the straps that I modelled for the miniature camera in order for it to be strapped onto and worn by participants. The camera will be removable, reusable, and transferable from body to body; it could thus be thought of as the participants' temporarily embodied touching and seeing prostheses. Furthermore, I chose to design the touching seeing prosthesis through referencing the colour and straps of prosthetics meant for missing limbs and dulled perception. Paradoxically, the prosthetic I made is not replacing any limb or non-functional perception; rather, I propose that it acts as a kind of addition, extension to, and enhancer of the body's perception. The camera prosthetic I made could also be seen either to

³¹² Haraway, D. *Simians, Cyborgs & Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p. 193.

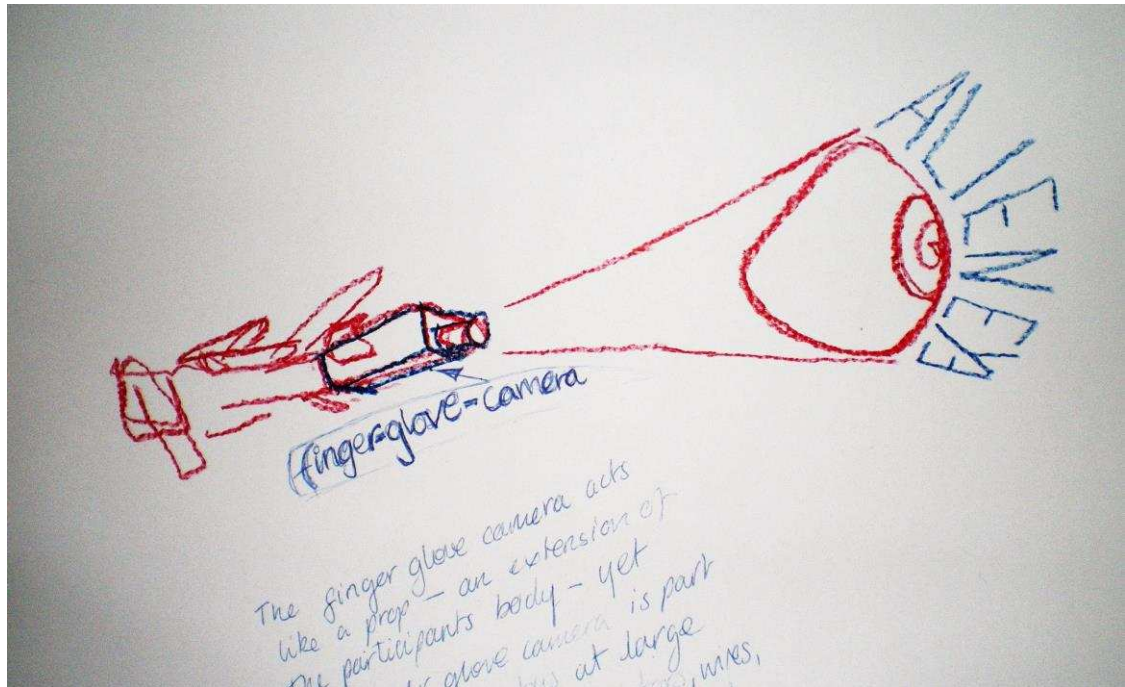


Fig. Ixi. Drawing (prosthesis camera capture)

be a substitution for or to conflict with and alter perception (for example like a hearing aid). I propose to strap the touching seeing prosthesis (the camera) to the participant's hand in an attempt to disrupt the conventional relation between the eyes of the participants/audience and the lens of the camera. Moreover, to subvert the usual act of looking through the camera, towards it, or being directed by the camera's look. I think that this new proposed relation between the participant and their prosthetic camera could potentially free the participant's eye from the camera lens as it would be attached to their hand. I imagine that by proposing to strap the camera to the participant's hand that the camera's capture might be driven by *touch* rather than by vision. I think that proposing to strap a camera to the participants' hands could alter their relation to the image, primarily because participants could chose to point at the image they want to produce.³¹³

³¹³ In Marks' interpretation of Bergson's definition of the image 'the difference between an objective reality and the perceived image is that the former is present in all its qualities while the latter isolates only that in which one is interested'. Marks, L. U. *The Skin of the Film*. London: Duke University Press, (2000), p. 146.

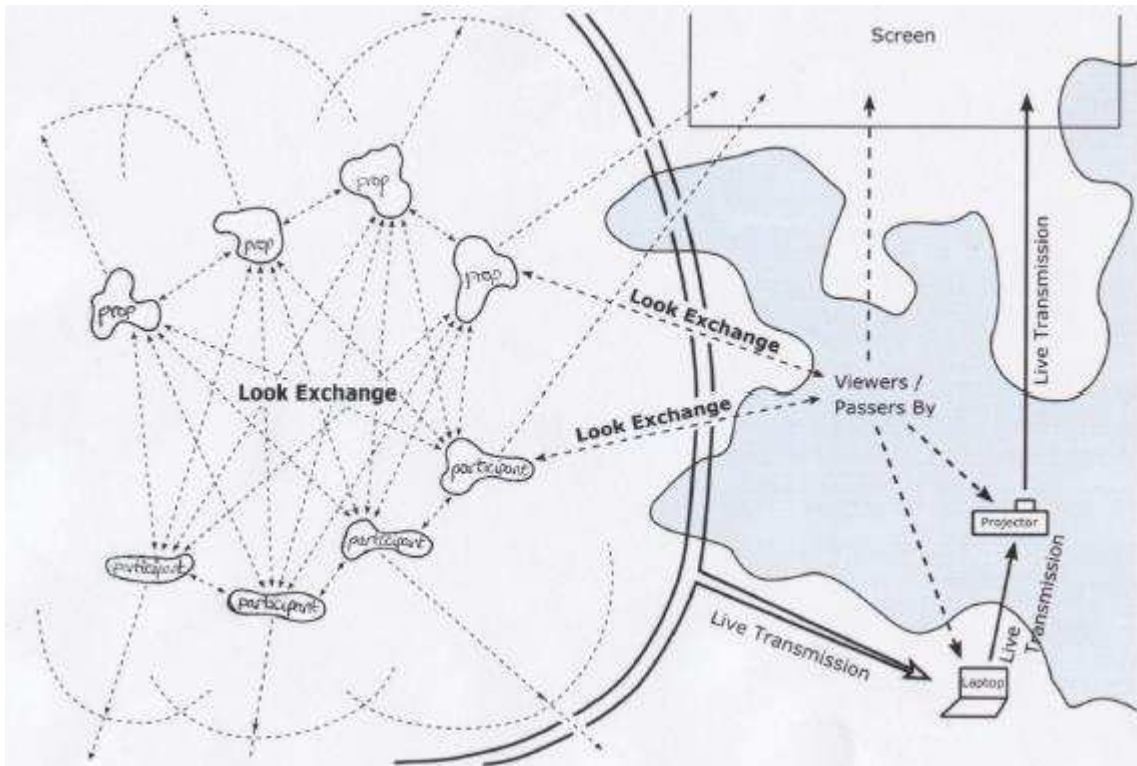


Fig. Ixii. Diagram 3

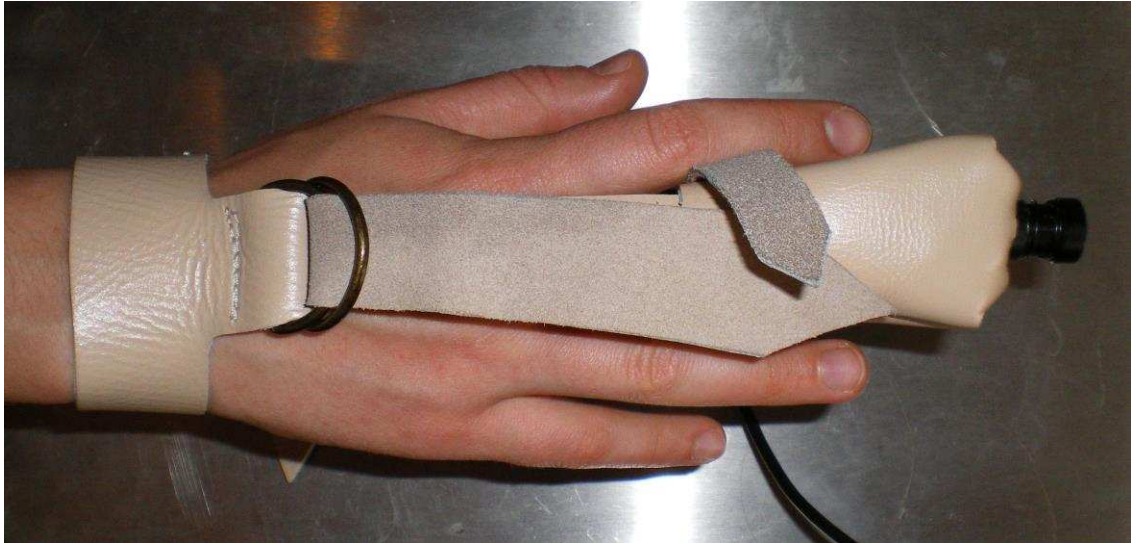


Fig. Ixiii. Photograph (participant prosthesis)

There is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds. All these pictures of the world should not be allegories of infinite mobility and interchangeability, but of elaborate specificity and difference and the loving care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another's point of view, even when the other is our own machine.³¹⁴

I think that a feminised cartographic process of inter-relationality might be dynamised by the inclusion of more cameras in the installation to admit further perspectives into the installation. *Diagram 3* proposes more than one prop with a camera affixed to it, more than one participant fitted with a prosthesis in the installation at any given time, and an equal number of live projections on-screen corresponding to the number of active cameras in the installation in order to attempt to disperse the references to the feminine across the scene of the installation. I think that through proposing to produce these varied perspectives within the scaffolding-area and on-screen the installation could be propelled beyond the singular, fixed, homogeneity of the (male) gaze cemented in *Diagrams 1, 2* and *X*. I think that *Diagram 3* could open up the installation spatially, mobilising it through the very properties of interaction by providing the possibility for participants to take up multiple positions.

³¹⁴ Ibid. p. 190.

I think that the conceptual rationale that I have applied so far in *Diagrams 1, 2 and X* has structured the manifestation of the maternal-feminine in the negative passively through the proposition of inter-relationality between the installation's contents. Considering the different interactive possibilities of *Diagram 3* I propose that the (maternal-) feminine negative might be actively composed, referenced and received. Before I further flesh-out a potential for active affects and effects of participation (this will be detailed in the forthcoming sections) I think it is important to mark my departure from the previously articulated conceptual framework on the emergence of the maternal-feminine in the negative, in terms of the feminine masquerade, feminine syntax and the archaic mother. Bearing in mind that whilst these have shaped and mapped the discourse on the feminine negative to this point in this thesis and the tropes developed through these concepts will continue to tangentially emerge from this point forth, I think it is important to note my conceptual shift. I think that these concepts which attempt to recover feminine subjectivity from the negative are all, in my interpretation, interminably passive in their constitution of the feminine negative. I will shift towards using an active structuration of the feminine negative position. Here is a brief outline of preceding applications that proposed to passively reference the feminine negative:

- **Feminine Masquerade**

Dividing up the installation between the scaffolding-area (as the interior body of the feminine) and the screen (as the exterior appearance of the feminine) through the structuration of the feminine masquerade could maintain her in a passive structuration of herself in the negative; situating her in the hegemony of phalloculocentrism as a non-subject circumscribed by lack and absence. Though the section *Measures of Distance* attempts to recuperate absence and loss through multiplying references to the maternal-feminine in the negative, perhaps it might be more appropriate to think through a gyneacentric approach that could provide a generative approach to image making. An approach in which a

double process of space and time might be composed through an active process of reception, so that the process of generating multiple references of the (maternal-) feminine composes her as a confusing and incoherent representation.

- **Feminine Syntax**

The inter-relationality of the installation's props and participants, proposed through their accumulative lexica as potentially connoting the maternal-feminine as a form of feminine syntax, could maintain her as a passively constituted negative space and as a negative space in language through the semiotic logic of phallogocentrism's construction of her as absence par excellence.³¹⁵

- **Archaic Mother**

I proposed to construct the installation as a kind of archaic mother.³¹⁶ Creed proposes that the archaic mother represents the womb as a creative and devouring site which has no equivalent in the male sex precisely because of its capacity to create. I imagined that the scaffolding-area could be a representation of the womb (as the maternal-feminine in the negative) and the screen the potential site of the obstetrician's view into the womb. Creed's proposition is essentially an active manifestation of the maternal-feminine as a castrating force. My interpretation and application of this theory in the installation constituted it haphazardly as a process of looking. I think that mapping the installation through this concept risks structuring the installation through a process of spatial visibility, situating it passively in terms of the negative. Proposing to peer inside the maternal-feminine through the obstetrician's view could figure the site/sight of the screen in a phallogocentric structure. As the thesis is not attempting to reveal an image of the feminine, rather it

³¹⁵ (I will address feminine syntax again in the conclusion as a potentially active process of audience and participant reception of on-screen images produced in the installation at the nightclub).

³¹⁶ Creed, B. *The Monstrous Feminine*. London: Routledge, (1993), p. 27.

attempts to explore a way to provide an experience of feminised spatiality through the installation in the nightclub.

Perhaps participants might encounter an active feminine representation through a process of what Irigaray theorises as reciprocity and inter-relationality.³¹⁷ Although I imagine that the props' and the participants' prostheses would comprise of similarly networked systems, by being connected through both their machinic and relational exchanges, I propose that they (participants and props prostheses) might still meet in difference whilst maintaining their own singularity. I think that the participants' and the props' prosthesis could organise the scene of interaction through a complex network of inter-relational exchanges and activate a potentially feminised process of spatiality.³¹⁸

Developing a theoretical approach to a potentially active way of referencing the feminine negative in the installation I intertwine Irigaray's and Haraway's approaches to inter-relationality and embodiment. Irigaray cultivates the notion of inter-relationality in terms of two worlds which are constituted by two differently sexuate subjects coming together through inter-relational encounters. Irigaray's approach to the issue of inter-relational encounters is in some ways similar to Haraway's positioning of multiple and variable differences that are sexuate and non-human. Both argue that the person must encounter the other whilst maintaining their respective differences. However, Irigaray's and Haraway's notions of subjectivity are significantly different. Irigaray maintains that only human relations are able to register in sexuate difference; whereas Haraway is not as concerned with how to directly polarise, to sex, to gender, relations in this way. Haraway negotiates difference through the inclusion of non-human counterparts (such as machines) to aid and abet in the configuration of difference. I am intertwining these two very different sensibilities first by collapsing the body of the participant with the miniature surveillance camera as

³¹⁷ My proposition here also takes into account Haraway's rejection of 'infinite mobility and interchangeability'. Ibid.

³¹⁸ Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*, London: Continuum, (2008).

a potential form of prosthesis in order to drive the imaging system, through Haraway's account. Second, by taking into account Irigaray's sensibility towards inter-relationality between others (in this case, possible participant exchanges proposed in *Diagram 3*), and through the configuration of the maternal-feminine through participants' composition of and audience's encounter with the image (of monstrous props). Through Haraway's approach I take into account technological processes that do not aim to alienate the user or the machine from each other, rather, they are embodied by the user; machines offer-up another point of view, aiding in constructing positional yet partially locatable perspectives.³¹⁹ I configure this approach with Irigaray's conception of the maternal-feminine's perception at the level of the tangible, as manifested through corporeality, towards proposing the maternal-feminine as a tangible inter-space (the feminine negative).

In Haraway's account of partiality, aided by the notion of embodying technology as prosthesis (and the potential to be a *cyborg image*), the machine becomes an extended aspect of perception. She maintains though that human/non-human perspectives can never be completely revealed. These perspectives – although partial and mobile – are always positional; importantly, perception is then not founded on disappearances and reappearances but admits difference in the partial constitution of perspectives. The reason why I think that it is vital to intertwine Haraway's notion of partially constituted perspectives with Irigaray's concept of inter-relationality is because partiality alone tends to lean towards processes of vision and the exterior body because of its reliance on perspectives. Coupling the notions of partiality and inter-relationality potentially invites a different entry into vision in a relation with an other. The relation between the apparatus and the participants is not the only aspect undergoing analysis in this thesis. The relation between the participants and audience is also under consideration, albeit in terms of imaging processes. Irigaray defines the process of inter-relationality as two differently sexuate

³¹⁹ Haraway, D. *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. In: *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. London: Free Associations Books, (1991), p. 190.

subjects that meet in difference from their own positions constituted as two separate worlds. As each has their own interior world, the two subjects meet from the position of their own respective world in the third world, which is cultivated between them through inter-relational encounters. They can meet in difference whilst protecting that difference and maintaining it in their own world, whilst sharing and exchanging through their encounter with each other in the third world. 'Rather the question is about the world that each one has to build in order to dwell in their own subjectivity and in this way be able to meet with the subjectivity of the other and enter into exchange with respect for differences, that is, for what is proper to each one'.³²⁰ What I am suggesting here is that though inter-relationality is positional it concerns the equality of exchange. Therefore I propose that in the event of an audience member becoming a participant that their relation/position would alter in relation to the audience (as observers) and that they would interact from their new relation/position, that of driving the process of exploration. I think that the process of inter-relationality acknowledges that roles can change and that this possibility is important to the relations between participants and audience; so that the plan for the installation can take this into account to provide the possibility for them to meet evenly, that is, from their respectively different positions. I think that what links these two sensibilities (partiality and inter-relationality) is that they acknowledge the inevitable invisibilities ensued by inter-subjective exchanges in difference. These concepts also underscore that these exchanges are positional, flexible and emergent in an embodied process (between interiority, maternal envelopment of a pre-nascent body, and exteriority, envelopment of a prosthetic machine). I am intertwining the inter-relational and partial because I think that these concepts are also inherently figured through a process of fragmentation.

I think that intertwining Irigaray's concept of inter-relationality with Haraway's notion of partiality admits the possibility of coupling reciprocity (as defined by Irigaray) between each other and the human connection with the

³²⁰ Irigaray, I. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008), p. 3.

machine (as discussed by Haraway). I think that *Diagram 3* could be composed through this conceptual register as a potentially active process of participation and reception through the inter-relational and partial encounters between participants' and props' prosthesis (cameras). I imagine that by providing multiple props and participants with prosthetic cameras, and by including numerous projected images, these multiple perspectives could actively mobilise participation and allow for participation itself to emerge as a potentially feminised process of spatiality. I therefore propose that the different participant/prop prosthesis (camera) positions suggested in *Diagram 3* could actively fragment the images on-screen through partially locatable yet mobile perspectives as a potential way to map a feminised cartographic process through:

- transitionality (mobility), spatially and between different bodies;
- corporeality (embodiment);
- exchange (relationality).

Diagram 3 might diminish the status of the apparatus as *all-seeing* because of the multiple cameras proposed and their potentially mobile perspectives. Rather than fixing the centre of the look from the camera's perspective and the screen image as a record of the camera's observation (as proposed in *Diagrams 1, 2* and *X*), I think that *Diagram 3* proposes the possibility for a generative and active encounter with a representation of the feminine negative.

The following section reviews how a partially locatable and an inter-relational exchange might arise between the scaffolding-area and the screen as two separate sites in participants' interaction and audience reception. To attempt to situate a feminised approach to spatiality I consider how the sites might maintain their distinct differences so that one site is not necessarily interacted with or received as a copy of the other.

Performance: Mapping

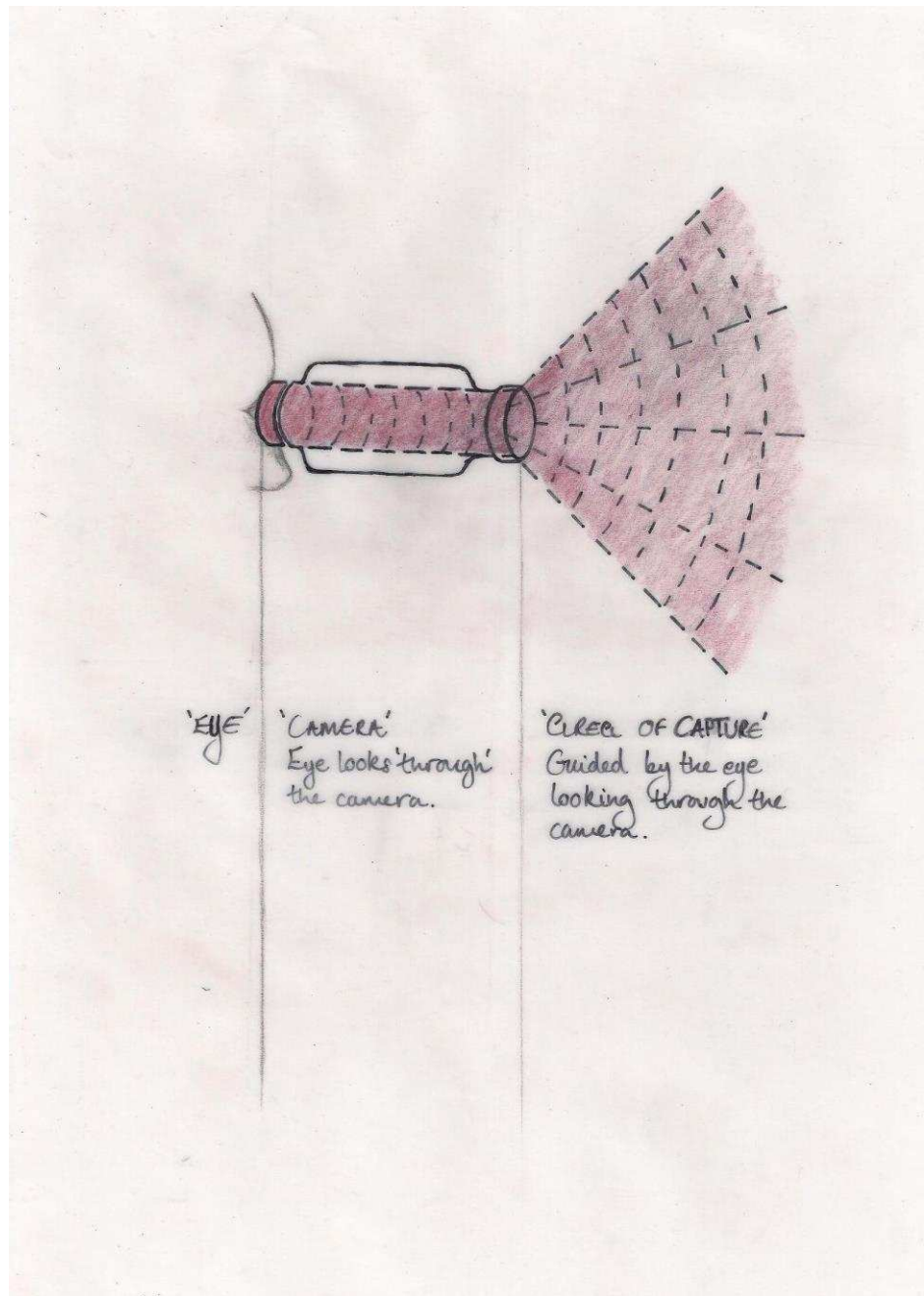


Fig. Ixiv. Drawing

This section considers the way in which watching, through partially locatable perspectives and inter-relationality, requires different entry routes into the encounter between the body of a machine and the body of a person. I further explore how Irigaray's and Haraway's theories might inform the relations between the scaffolding-area and the screen through the technological

apparatus in preparation for the installation at the nightclub. This section investigates the relation between the body and the imaging apparatus through Jonathan Crary's exploration of this theme.

The organic eye and the camera eye are composed of necessarily different operations, although their outcomes may be similarly figured according to the ways in which they organise the visual field. Crary explains how approaches to the visible are effected through a complex set of relations in which perception is informed and structured through 'an irreducibly heterogenous system of discursive, social, technological, and institutional relations. There is no observing subject prior to this continually shifting field'.³²¹ I think that Crary suggests that human observation is shaped through this process as he draws an important distinction between the observing subject and the observing machine. He suggests that the machine's observation is dependent on the machine's/apparatu's aim and how it situates the observing subject in relation to its aim/function. In the early eighteenth century the camera obscura was researched as a possible version of the eye as a machine, in an attempt to understand the optical function of the eye (see image: *Comparison of eye and camera obscura. Early eighteenth century*).³²² This could be regarded as the beginnings of the alignment between the eye/vision and the machine/apparatus for observation as a version of seeing.³²³

Crary's map of perception consists of situating the machine and the observer, explaining that through this 'we've been trained to assume that an observer will always leave visible tracks, that is, will be identifiable in relation to images'.³²⁴ Reflecting on this statement led me to query how *Diagram 3* might compose the image in terms of (phallogocentric) legibility. How might the on-screen images be read if the installation at the nightclub is composed like *Diagram 3*? I think that what is at stake in *Diagram 3*'s proposition is the status of the images production on the screen and whether the images might be regarded by the audience as the 'visible tracks' left by participants

³²¹ Crary, J. *Techniques of the Observer*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, (1992), p.6.

³²² *Ibid.* p. 49.

³²³ *Ibid.* p. 33.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* p.150.

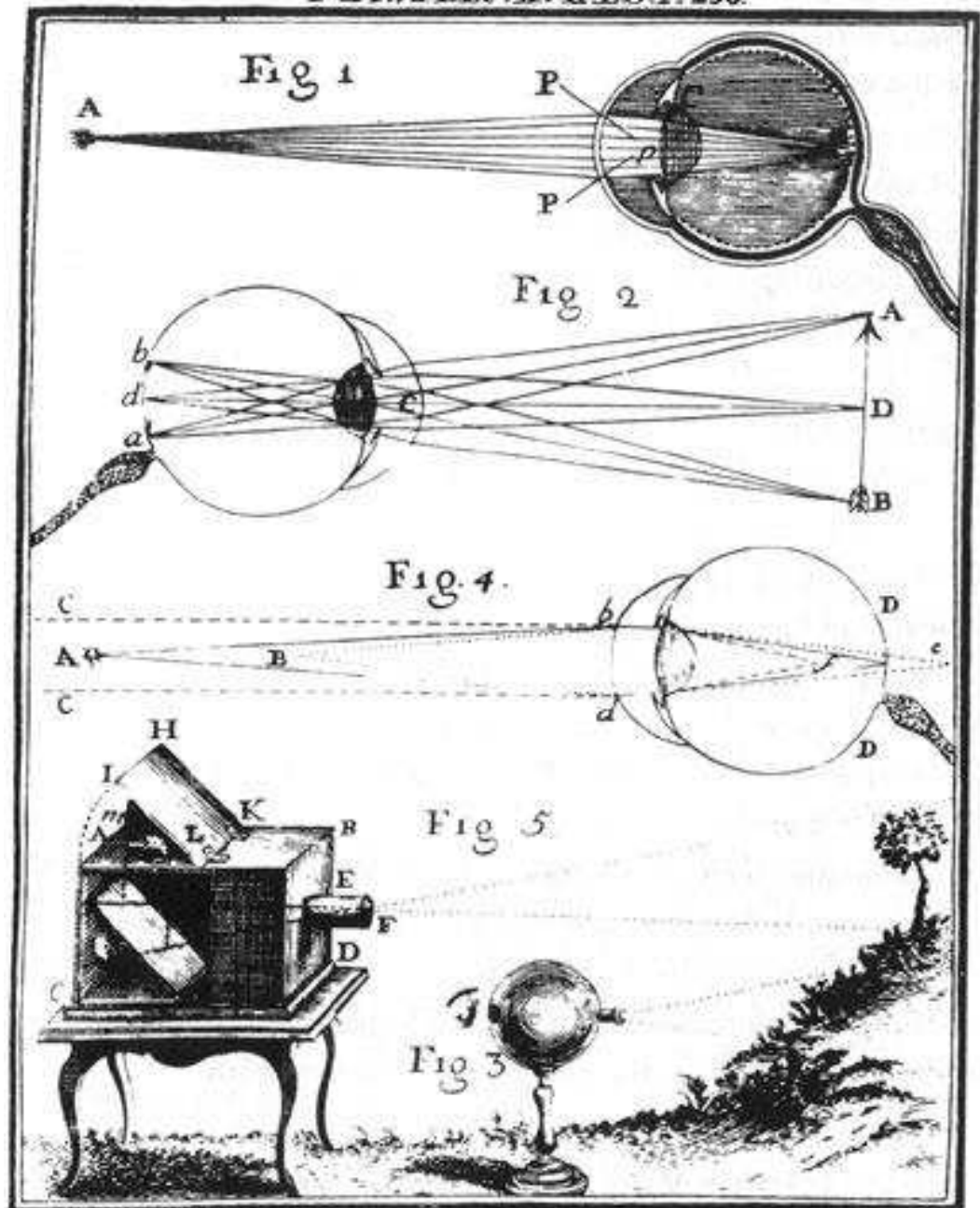


Fig. lxxv. Comparison of eye and camera obscura. Early eighteenth century.

(because of the potential for the orientation of their own prosthetic camera). I do not think that *Diagram 3* would present the image as a process of visibly tracking participant interaction. I employ the map as a cartographic method in the thesis; I am proposing that a feminised form of mapping movement and orientation in participants' inter-relational exchange with the image through their prosthetic camera might compose a feminised space in the negative. I

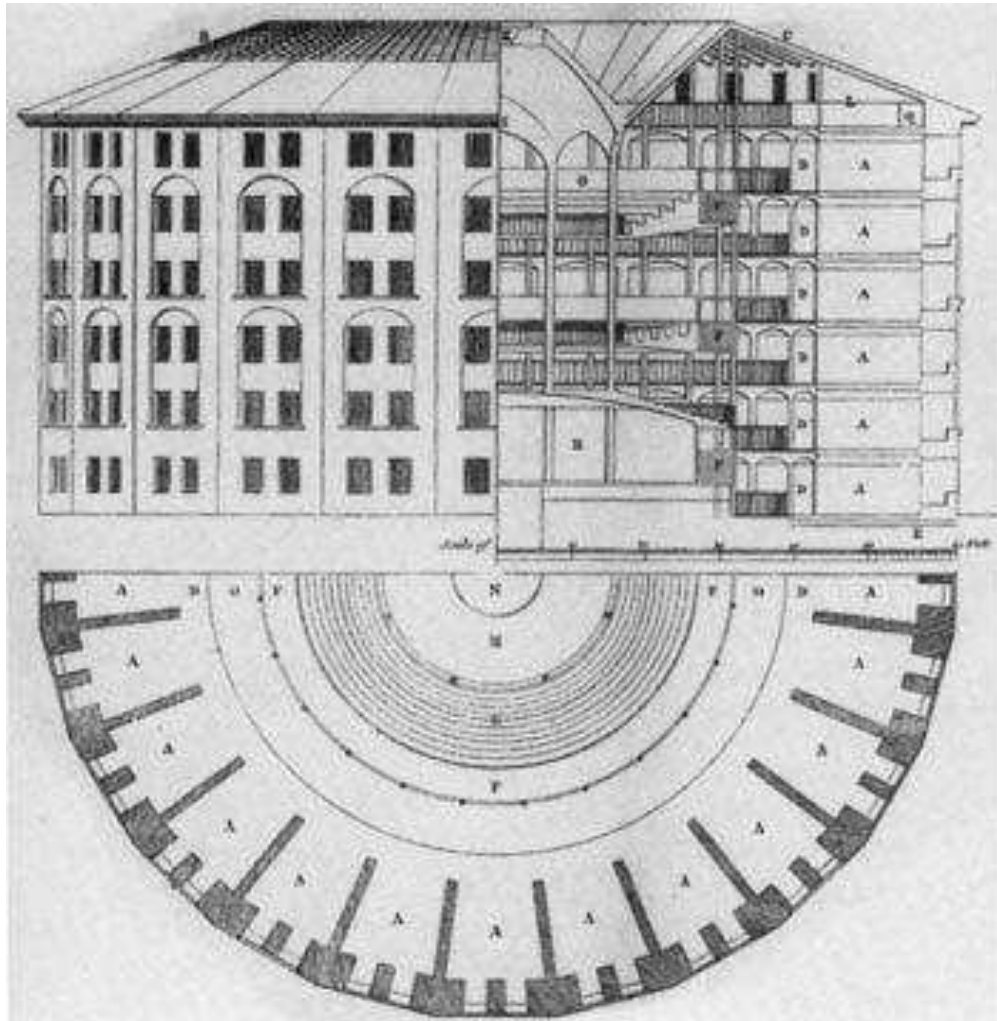


Fig. Ixvi. Jeremy Bentham, *Panopticon*, (1791)

am not attempting to test whether participants' interaction with the apparatus is traceable and legible, whether perspectives can be traced back to their original geometral point of view. I want to assess whether participants' interaction can be (tracked,) mapped in a partially locatable and tangible way in order to propose that this arises through a process of touching and movement between the two sites at the same time, as a possible process of feminine spatiality and perception.

I am not trying to structure a *panopticon* (refer to image by Jeremy Bentham). The *panopticon* suggests that vision might be visibly traced because the eye/look are figured at the centre of the prison structure, in order to better control those incarcerated (in the context of the beginnings of institutionalised surveillance). I am not trying to structure the centre of the

look through the screen. My project is not concerned with retracing the visual narrative structured by the participants live on-screen. This would imply that my intention is to relay one space over an other so as to trace it, meaning that I would be treating the scaffolding-area as the original site and the screen as its replicable version, effectively claiming that the screen traces the scaffolding-area's activities. I am attempting to structure both sites differently through a process of diagrammatical mapping. I want to open up the sites for the possibility of participant orientation of the image within and between these two partially locatable sites, to afford a process of feminised spatial multiplicity rather than structurally setting up the installation as a recourse to the dominant paradigm's dictate and logic of the original (subject as male). If this were the case, it would maintain the scaffolding-area as the original event and the screen as its traceable outcome, the screen would then be analogously structured as the mirror, as the feminine negative, to the original subject/site through the scaffolding-area. Moreover, I am attempting to affect a bilateral figuration between the scaffolding-area and screen in which one site does not evidence or necessarily prove the other, but in which the sites inter-relationally and partially inform each other. I intend to approach these as two distinctly different sites; hence I plan not to trace/record the video feeds produced by the props or participants' interactions; so as to approach the installation's interactivity and image production as a temporary and unstable process for the audience (non-participating viewer) and participants, and to explore a way to shift the installation to the register of the (maternal-) feminine. Instead of constructing the reception of the installation in terms of the camera's/voyeur's occupation of the centre of the look, as an eye/camera that glides smoothly over visible surfaces, I think that the composition of *Diagram 3* might challenge the smooth continuity of the visible because its design seems to be predicated on temporal and spatial fragmentation. In this way I think that *Diagram 3* is indicative of performance art practices' temporal losses and absences as correlative to the (maternal-) feminine negative as a potentially activating

process – as Phelan remarks: ‘theatre marks the perpetual disappearance of its own enactment’.³²⁵

Taking up the tropes of this section, in terms of relations between different spatial modes, multiplicity, and fragmentation the following section, *Diagram 4*, charts the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub. *Diagram 4* is composed of many different orientations and representations of the installation without pinning down one central version of the installation. *Diagram 4* then methodologically proposes a feminised cartographic account of the installation through its multifarious composition.

³²⁵ Phelan, P. *Unmarked*. London: Routledge, (2006), p. 115.

Diagram 4

(f)low visibility was installed in the nightclub *Torture Garden* in 2008 (please refer to the DVD documentation of the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub in *Appendix 1*). There were no image transmissions between the cameras and the projectors in *(f)low visibility*. I used cables to connect the cameras' live-feed to the projectors. The bronze and the foetus props each had a miniature camera affixed to them. In an attempt to structure the feminine negative through the curation of the props (and the two cameras on the props), I began by hanging the bronze prop at breast height to acknowledge the prop's reference to woman's body (namely the breasts), so that when participants encountered it, it was situated relationally to their body. In this way I think that the prop was situated like a mirror of woman's body (albeit a monstrous reflection of the maternal-feminine). The camera on the prop also represented a kind of mirroring of the feminine. The foetus prop was situated on a trolley with speculums, indicating the maternal-feminine's invisible interiority, further referencing the feminine in the negative with its own prosthetic perspective. The wax lumpen prop was suspended from a weighing mechanism (as though at once representing deformed breasts and a monstrous baby being weighed), so as to abridge the foetus prop's and the bronze prop's references to woman's interior/exterior body.³²⁶

Only two touching/seeing prostheses (miniature cameras worn by participants) were active throughout the duration of the installation – the two cameras to be worn by participants, the bronze prop's camera and the foetus props camera were each connected to one of the four projectors. I situated the four projectors on top of the scaffolding-area to acknowledge that they were part of the installation's contents and not simply an autonomous imaging mechanism. I situated them in this way because as the projectors render the

³²⁶ As well as including the props discussed in the section *The Monstrous: Props*, I also included cast wax legs that were hand stitched and hung in the scaffolding-area as part of the relocation of my practice from my studio to the nightclub.

images perceptible, they risked overpowering the rest of the installation's contents (in a similar way to the situation of the camera in *Diagram 2*). Not markedly connecting the apparatus/participants to the image risked separating the image from the participants and the scaffolding-area and might therefore situate the image as an independent autonomous image (maintaining a phallogocentric framework). Although I am approaching both sites as distinctly different processes my intention for the artwork is for it to be composed through the emergence of four images projected on one screen, through the inter-relations between the two sites, without one site overpowering the other. I intend for both sites to be mutually constituted, towards composing the four images projected on one screen as a process composed by feminine spatiality. To avoid empowering the apparatus (by way of using live transmissions between cameras and moving images on-screen) in this way I connected the cameras to the projectors with cables, so that the connection would be visible to participants and audience. The direct connections between the apparatus (cameras and projectors) was implemented so as to indicate a clear relation between the camera and the image output and the liveness of the image, in order to lay the ground for inter-relational exchanges between the different sites. I think that this was instrumental in assuring participants that there were no interventions between the live-feeds they directed and the rendition of the images on-screen. For example, laptops were included in the design of *Diagrams 1, 2* and *3*, but I decided not to use a laptop as the central connector between the camera and image transmission. I thought that the inclusion of the laptop may suggest that the images of the live-feeds could have been intercepted/rerouted/altered; or at least the mere inclusion of a laptop would implicitly gesture the threat of interceptions. There was a direct physical link between the participants' prosthesis and the images guided by them:

Participant's hand ➡ miniature camera ➡ cable ➡ projector (1 of 4)
 ➡ light emitted from the projector ➡ to the image rendered on screen.

Fig. Ixvii. *Diagram 4* (Schema: Direct, uninterrupted material links between participant & image direction/rendition.)

Perhaps the material connection between participants and their prosthesis structured and directed participant responses in the installation, towards the moving images on-screen as site/destination of their interactions. I think that participants composed *(f)low visibility* as an artwork that composes live moving images, constructing *(f)low visibility* as a site that facilitates participant directed composition of moving images on the screen.

Diagram 4: *(f)low visibility*

In order to represent the various processes of fragmentation in the reception of the installation in the nightclub I think it is vital to map the coordinates of its composition in the nightclub through different representations of it in this thesis. The diagram so far has been mapped through four different versions in this thesis: *Diagrams 1, 2, X and 3*. *Diagram 4* attempts to further fragment the site/sight of the diagram in this thesis. *Diagram 4* is composed of photographs of the installation in situ, plans, drawings, video, video stills and diagrams. *Diagram 4* does not appear as one version of a propositional event but as one diagram constituted of multiple versions of the event, which corroborate to compose the representation of installation in the nightclub in this thesis as a practice of feminised cartography. *Diagrams 1, 2, X and 3* have paved the way for this multiple emergence of *Diagram 4* as a process of partially locatable versions of the installation (in the nightclub). *Diagram 4* is not figured as one holistic site/sight as it does not fix one perspective through the diagram itself. It composes, and is composed, spatially and temporally, by the fragmented versions of the installation (in the nightclub). *Diagram 4* does not have to be entered through any specific route. There is not one way to map the process of the installation's event in the nightclub because this is a way of potentially mapping a feminised process of spatiality.

Figured as a mobile architecture, the *Diagram* is on the move throughout the thesis and resists being permanently situated. *Diagram 4* attempts to further

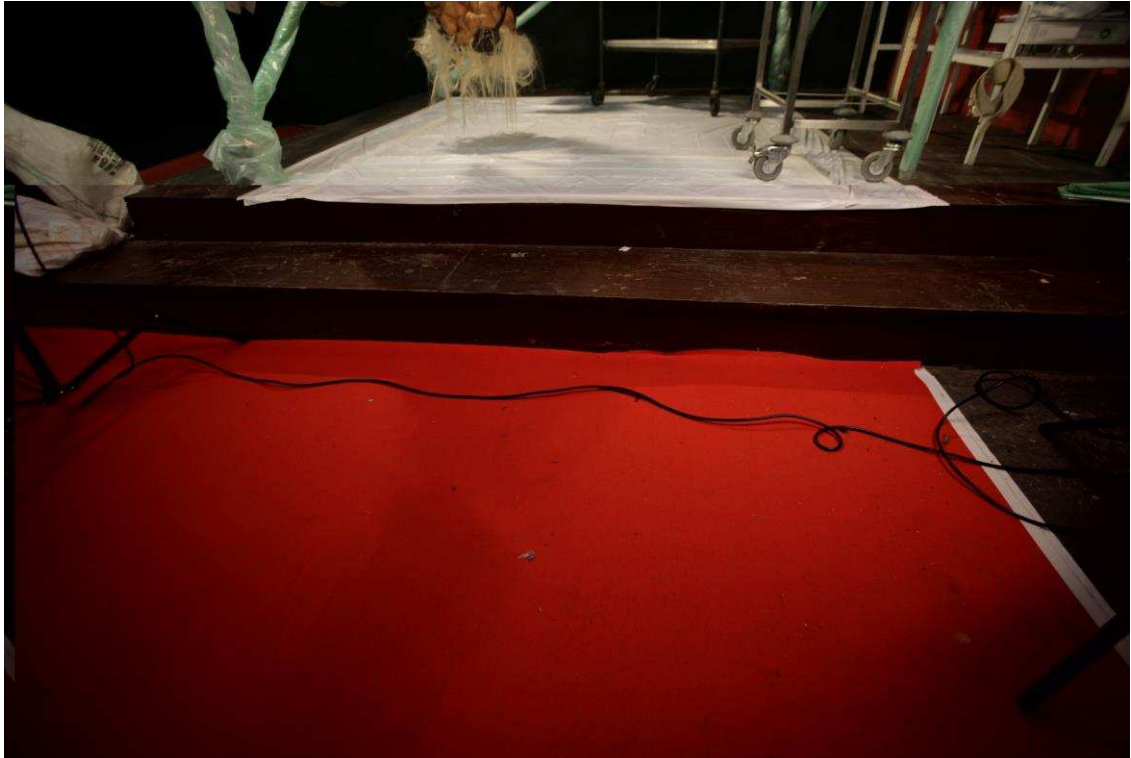


Fig. lxviii. *Diagram 4, (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

disrupt the fixity of perspectives in order to configure the diagram itself as multi-positional, as an endlessly reorientable map that manifests in many different forms. *Diagram 4* tracks the different kinds of preparations for the compositions and interpretations of the installation. *Diagram 4* represents *(f)low visibility's* installation in the nightclub in this thesis, mapping the event of the installation in preparation for my approach to it as a fragmented, unstable, and disrupted site.

The title *(f)low visibility* was selected for the piece because the installation intends to contest visibility, furthermore the fluidity of the visible. The proposition for the installation being a disruption of the visible site/sight is suggested in the title. By bracketing the β ²⁷ to mark the *low* visibility of the feminine in phallogulocentrism.

³²⁷ (Bracketing parts of words is a feminist strategy used to enter into male-centric language).

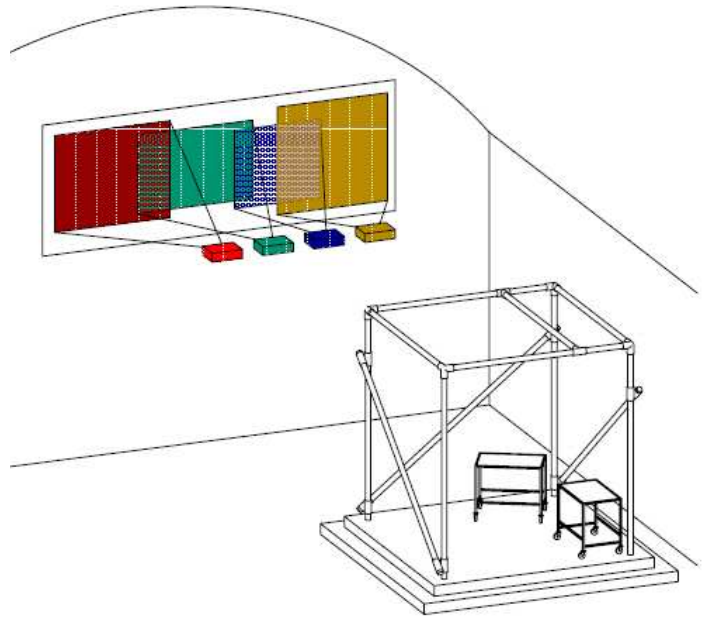


Fig. Ixix. *Diagram 4 (Plan)*



Fig. Ixx. *Diagram 4, (f)low visibility, Installation, (Photograph)*



Fig. lxxi. *Diagram 4, (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

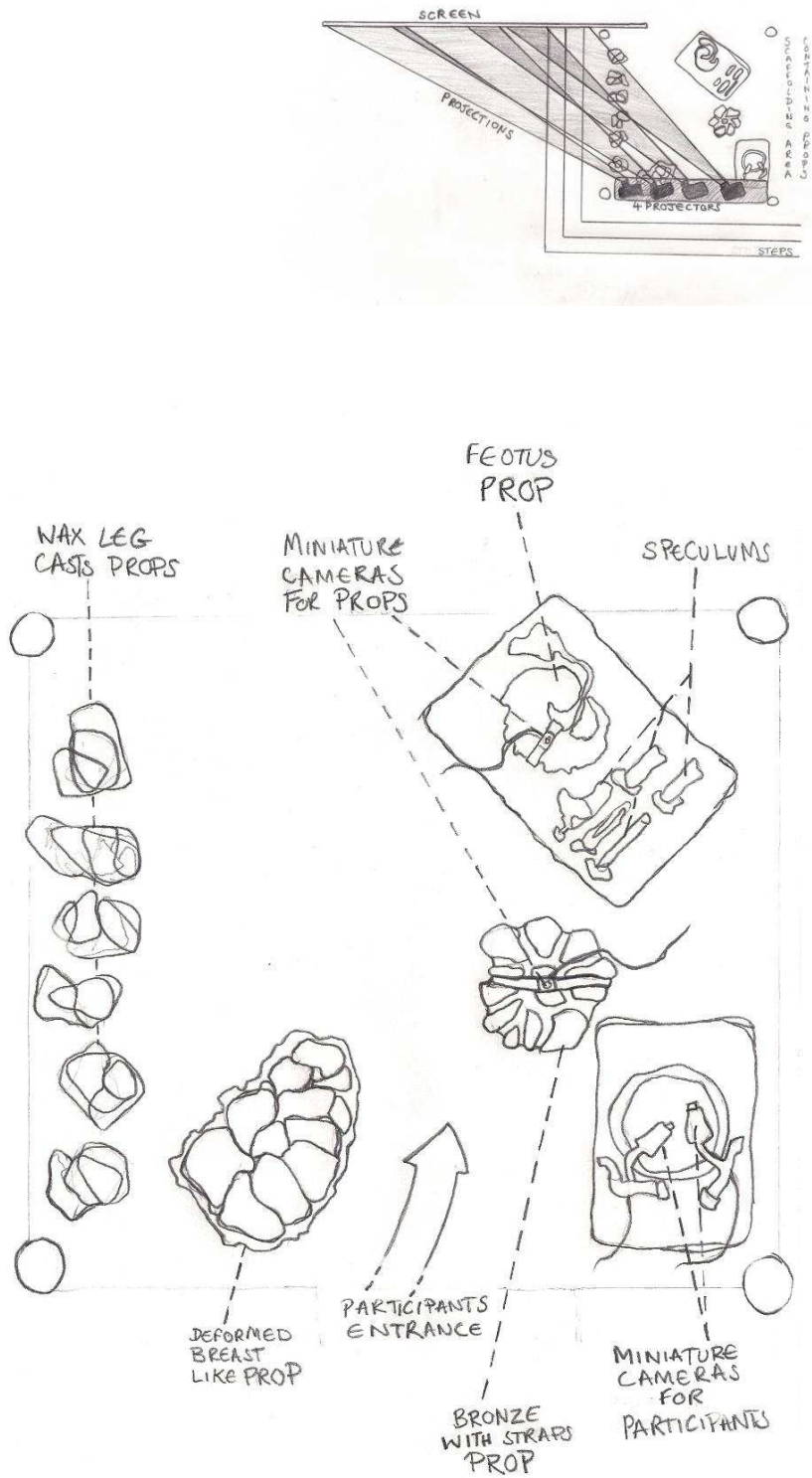


Fig. Ixxii. Diagram 4 (Drawing x2)

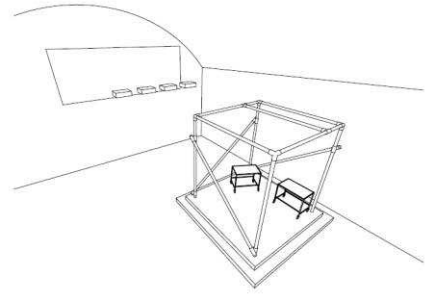


Fig. Ixxiii. *Diagram 4 (Plan)*

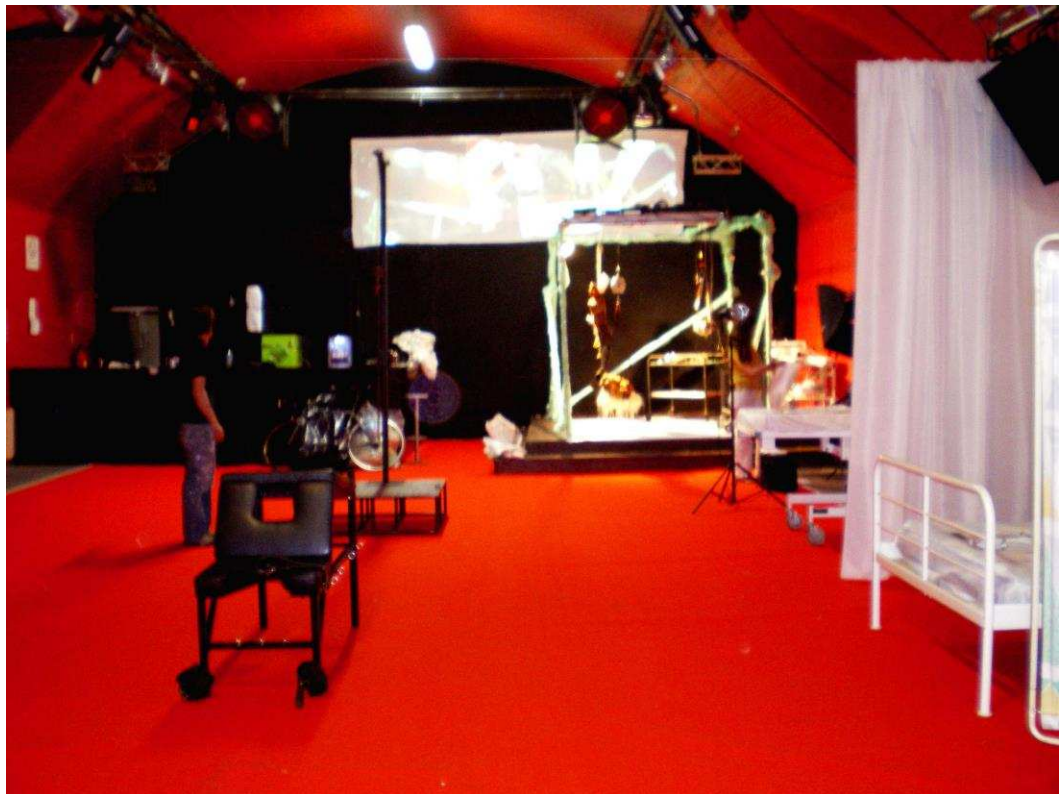


Fig. Ixxiv. *Diagram 4, (f)low visibility, Installation, (Photograph)*

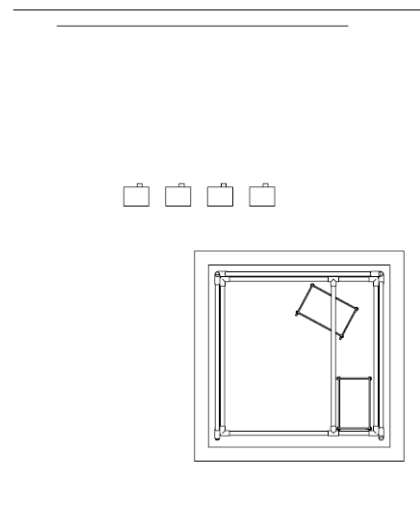


Fig. lxxv. *Diagram 4* (Design)



Fig. lxxvi. *Diagram 4, (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Plan & Photograph)

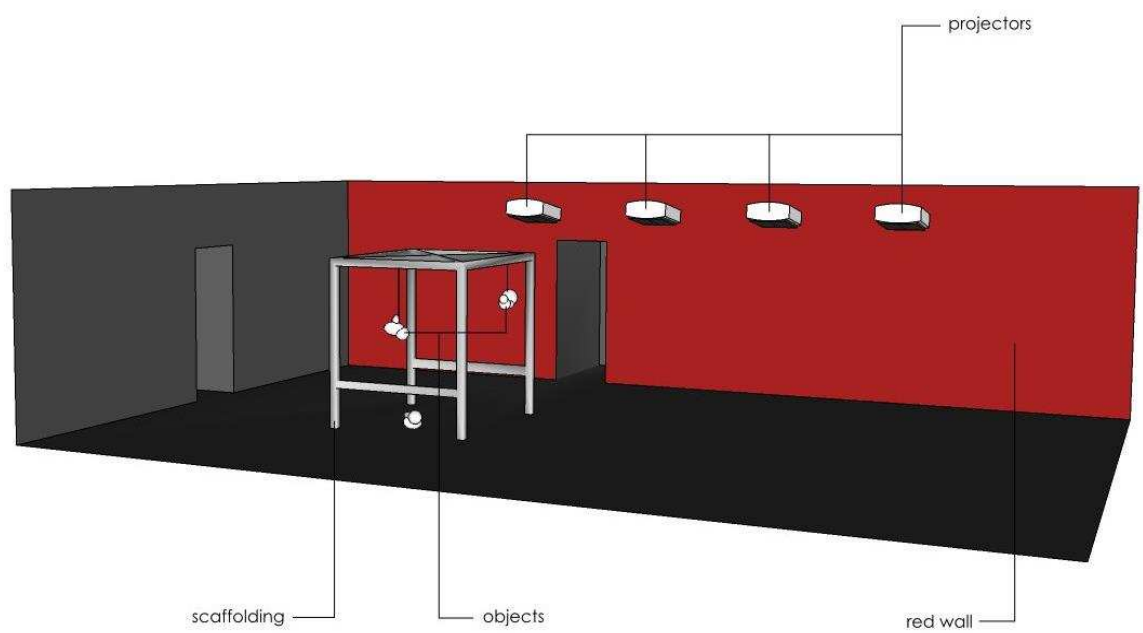


Fig. lxxvii. *Diagram 4* (Design)



Fig. lxxviii. *Diagram 4, (f)low visiblity*, Installation, (Photographs x2)

(f)low visibility's Orientation through Touch

This section begins to draw out the conclusion to the thesis and aims to unpack the question which leads my practice lead research: how might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phalloculocentric reading of an artwork? My analysis of *(f)low visibility* in the thesis draws on my observation of interaction and reception of the event in the nightclub.

The installation of *(f)low visibility* took place at a nightclub (Torture Garden) in 2008 for one night. It is not a film, for the video images were produced live on the screen through participants' interaction for audience reception. Irrespective, I analyse *(f)low visibility* through theories on cinematic experience and the ideological construct of the cinematic apparatus because in these theories the audience's reception of on-screen images is in my interpretation structured through the (male) look/gaze.

It is the place of the look that defines cinema, the possibility of varying it and exposing it [...] Going far beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked at in the spectacle itself.³²⁸

I analyse how the participants' and audience's (non participating viewers) gaze was potentially de-centred in their reception of *(f)low visibility* through a process of spatiality, through a potentially altered experience of spatiality and shift in perceptual register. I also propose that the images of the maternal-feminine on-screen potentially disrupted the symbolicity of the screen image as a usual site of male desire. I apply different theoretical approaches to cinematic experience to interpret the processes of the cinematic apparatus in order to explore *(f)low visibility's* reception.

³²⁸ Mulvey, L. Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. In: Rosen, P. (ed.) *Narrative Apparatus Ideology*, A Film Theory Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 208.



Fig. Ixxix. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility, Installation, (Photograph)*

As Laura Mulvey proposes that:

The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions [...] is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics, passionate detachment.³²⁹

I discuss how the participants and audience's reception³³⁰ of the image might be interpreted as being established beyond a phallogocentric framework through their relation to:

- the two sites (scaffolding-area and the on-screen image);
- the camera as a process of "touching";

³²⁹ Ibid. p. 209.

³³⁰ The conclusion explores in depth the reception of (f)low visibility in the nightclub. However, in the DVD documentation of the installation which can be found in Appendix 1, the audience are not visible. For ethical reasons I did not record images of the audience as it would have been impossible to obtain consent from each audience member/passers-by in the nightclub. Each participant consented in writing to being videoed.



Fig. lxxx. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

- and their relation to and perception of images as a process of “touching”.

I suggest that a form of enfleshed maternal-feminine perception shaped participants’ and audience’s reception of images as a process that orientated images through touch in *(f)low visibility* as a potentially feminised cartographic method. I consider synaesthesia, embodiment, and enfleshing as feminine processes of perception, towards developing my proposition for an active process of referencing the feminine negative in the installation.

I analyse how *(f)low visibility* (*Diagram 4*³³¹) challenges phalloculocentric apparatus/audience (and participants) relations by critiquing Jean-Louis

³³¹ *Diagram 4* continues to map the event of the installation throughout this section.

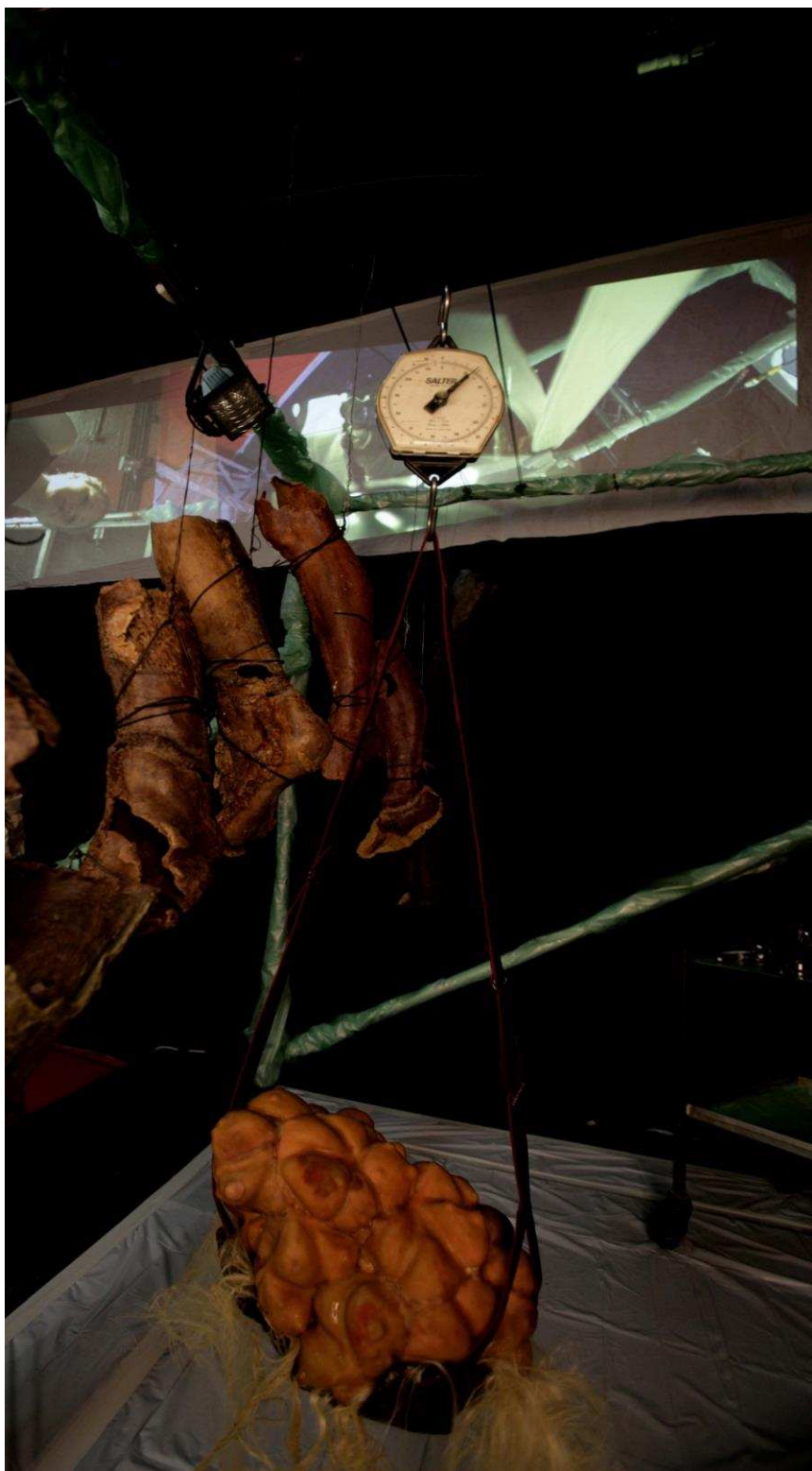


Fig. lxxxi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

Baudry's interpretation of the apparatus in cinematic experience as enforcing a phalloculocentric framework between apparatus and spectator in the cinema. I also consider alternative feminist models of apparatus/spectator relations in cinematic experience and reconsider the embodied process of Marks' haptic erotic (previously discussed in *Vision and the Gaze: Phalloculocentrism*). I develop Marks' notion of embodiment through Vivian Sobchack's interpretation of the body's spatial relation to, and subsequent embodiment of, film in cinematic experience. I further develop an embodied approach to interpreting *(f)low visibility* by laying the theoretical grounds for intertwining, Irigaray's and Haraway's notions of embodiment, enfolded and partial processes of perception (developed in the previous section), to explore different interpretations of the participants' navigation of their prosthesis and the images in the installation.

In my (feminist) interpretation, Baudry's theorising on the cinematic apparatus in relation to the spectator is structured as a phalloculocentric model of gazing between the camera, the film, the image and the spectator. He proposes that the look is centred by the camera in an optical relation to the spectator. Baudry not only focuses on vision as the primary process of perception, he also argues that the eye takes flight from the body. He situates the eye as an operation of fleeting mobile perspectives and parallels this with the operation of the camera. He describes this analogy between the eye and the camera as an 'eye which moves [that] is no longer fettered by the body'.³³² Baudry seems to deny the other bodily senses, which in my interpretation of Irigaray's theories on the maternal-feminine, precede and inform vision. I think that Baudry's theorising of cinematic experience is a profoundly disembodied one in which the spectator's gaze is exteriorised (it goes out from the body), whilst the spectator's body is inscribed by the phantom camera. Baudry seems to enforce the relation of the eye, vision and the camera in the spectator's

³³² Baudry, J. L. Ideological effects of the basic cinematographic apparatus. In: Rosen, P. (ed.) *Narrative Apparatus Ideology, A Film Theory Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 292.



Fig. lxxxii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

cinematic experience and disregards the embodied relation a spectator could have with a film image.

Thus the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle makes it seen, obliging him to see what it sees; this is exactly the function taken over by the camera as a sort of relay.³³³

Baudry proposes that the camera/eye can substitute and stand in for the body:

Everything happens as if, the subject himself being unable—and for a reason—to account for his own situation, it was necessary to substitute secondary organs,

³³³ Ibid. p. 295.

grafted onto replace his own defective ones, instruments or ideological formations capable of filling his function as a subject.³³⁴

In my interpretation of his theorising it appears that the phallic/eye of the camera inscribes the passive spectator's body. The spectator in cinematic experience views the film from the phantom camera's perspective, whilst at the same time (Baudry says that) the image can only cohere in the viewer and become continuous in the visible in its reception precisely because the camera is denied in viewing. In Baudry's words, 'the projection mechanism allows the differential elements the discontinuity inscribed by the camera to be suppressed, bringing only the relation into play'.³³⁵ In my interpretation of Baudry's theorising on the cinematic apparatus the inscription of the spectator's body by the phantom camera, coupled with the spectator's denial of the camera, seems analogous to the structure of castration anxiety. Lacan explains that through castration anxiety woman's lacking body is encountered in the visible. The little boy consequently images her as phallic in his disavowal of her lacking body.³³⁶ Therefore, according to Lacan woman's body becomes the phallus when she is seen by the little boy, in order to cope with the threat of castration that her body poses the little boy denies her sex and thus she is inscribed with the phallus (as the proper signifier of desire). I think that in this way Baudry institutes a phalloculocentric spectatorial process of viewing in relation to the inscription of the body of the spectator with the phallic camera's perspective which is simultaneously disavowed by the spectator. I propose that *(f)low visibility* counters this phalloculocentric model. Participants' experiences seemed to be composed through their navigation of the scaffolding-area and the reception of the on-screen image, which I suggest was driven by their tactile encounter with the props in both sites and by their prosthetic camera.

There were four projections on the screen, each imaging a different perspective from within the scaffolding-area. Participants seemed to mostly

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid. p. 291.

³³⁶ Lacan, J. Of the Gaze A Objet Petit a. In: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. London: Vintage, (1998), p. 102.



Fig. lxxxiii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

focus on the projection which displayed the live-feed from their own camera. I think that the audience's experience was at times split between the scaffolding-area and the on-screen images, although the audience's focus was mostly directed towards the screen their gaze seemed to continually shift between the four projections on-screen.

Baudry concatenates the antiquated binary logic of film theory between viewing subject, spectator and visible object; whereby the film devises the spectator as an empty receiver of the film, a typical bifurcation in film theory (that is critiqued in Sobchack's book *The Address of the Eye*).³³⁷ However (in *Diagram 4*) I propose that participants orientation of, and navigation through, the on-screen images occurred through their embodied relation to the apparatus and the on-screen image. I think that the audience (non participating viewer) received images on-screen through the register of touch precisely because of

³³⁷ Sobchack, V. *The Address of the Eye*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1992), pp. 21 – 23.

the participants' embodied interaction with and production of images. I think that in Baudry's account the viewer is not in an exchange with the film (images on-screen) but, rather, the viewer's body is doubled at the site of the camera. Baudry situates the viewer as the receiver of a dead narrative, as the film unfolds a narrative which is constructed prior to its presentation to the audience in the cinema.³³⁸ It seems that in Baudry's account, the absent camera composes the spectator as the substitution for phallic vision. I think that Baudry situates the spectator's body as an absent, lacking and passive body (like woman's structuration under the (male) gaze). The spectator's body can only be inscribed by the active object; this being the (phallic) camera's viewing perspective.

Though my analysis of the diagrams has been largely concerned with evening out the power relations of the look between the apparatus, audience and participants, I think that the active objects which inscribed the participants' (and audience's) bodies were not the cameras; rather, I propose that they were affected by their encounter with the props in the installation. In turn, the audience did not seem to identify with the look of the cameras but with the on-screen images navigated by participants. Participants seemed to be driven by the desire to make on-screen images of the props. These images appeared to represent their exploration of maternal-feminine interiority. Through my observations it seemed that participants encountered props in the scaffolding-area prior to detecting them with their camera; and that the props' tactile quality set the register of encounter with the props at the level of touch, which seemed to drive their tactile orientation of the camera.;they moved their hand (equipped with their prosthetic camera) over the surface of the props.

However, I propose that *(f)low visibility* operated differently to Baudry's phalloculocentric approach (to the relation between the apparatus and the screen) as participants (in *(f)low visibility*) were not in the place of the phantom

³³⁸ 'No doubt the darkened room and the screen bordered with black like a letter of condolence already present privileged condition of effectiveness—no exchange, no circulation, no communication with any outside.' Baudry, J.P. Ideological Effects of the Basic Apparatus. In: Rosen, P. (ed.) Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology, A Film Theory Reader. New York: Columbia University Press, (1986), p. 294.



Fig. lxxxiv. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

camera. I propose that participants were not inscribed by the (phallic) camera; rather, I think that they were in a double space in relation to the camera through:

- encountering and imaging the props in the scaffolding-area with their prosthetic camera,
- and receiving/composing the fragmented images of the props on the screen.

I think that the camera (apparatus) did not take possession of the participants' gaze; rather, participants' desire to compose images seemed to be orientated by a tactile process of navigation. Once the touching/vision prosthetic camera was put on a participant's hand, the participant usually tried to locate which projection, out of the four on the screen, they were controlling. Most participants established this by waving their free hand in front of the lens of their prosthetic camera. Others shook their prosthesis, or pointed it at a friend, and

occasionally, but rarely, pointed it at their own face. Out of the four images on-screen, participants tended to focus on the one image they were in control of. Interaction occurred in many different ways. However, two aspects of interaction were consistent throughout:

- Participation with each other: There seemed to be a singular and solitary approach by participants. They did not tend to interact with each other or with the audience in the scaffolding-area. Moreover, they tried to avoid each other so as to better orientate and compose the images on-screen.³³⁹
- Participating with the contents (props/apparatus/prosthesis): Participants shared a commonality in their production and reception of the artwork. Concerned with the production of the images on-screen, the participants seemed to be led by a desire to image and navigate the on-screen image of monstrous maternal-feminine props. I think that their navigation of both sites was plotted through their inter-relational exchange with the actual and virtual props. Participants seemed to image the props by orientating their body and prosthetic camera in relation to the props, so as to locate themselves temporarily (in relation to the actual props) in order to navigate through the on-screen images (of the props). I interpret this process as a double activity that occurred synchronically through participation for the very purposes of imaging.

I proceed with the latter point so as to map *(f)low visibility* through the mobilisation of the diagram through the two sites and participants' interaction to develop my proposal for the installation as an emergent process of feminine spatiality. I propose that participants' gaze was not centred, rather they seemed to look between different points as if to relocate themselves through a choice set of coordinates, such as: the cameras, on-screen images, props and themselves. Participants preferred to navigate the on-screen image rather than the actual site they occupied (scaffolding-area). I propose that participants navigated the

³³⁹ Further on in the conclusion I elaborate on participants' solitary interaction and the audience's focus on the on-screen image as a process which centred the on-screen image as the site of interest in which audience and participants encountered each other.

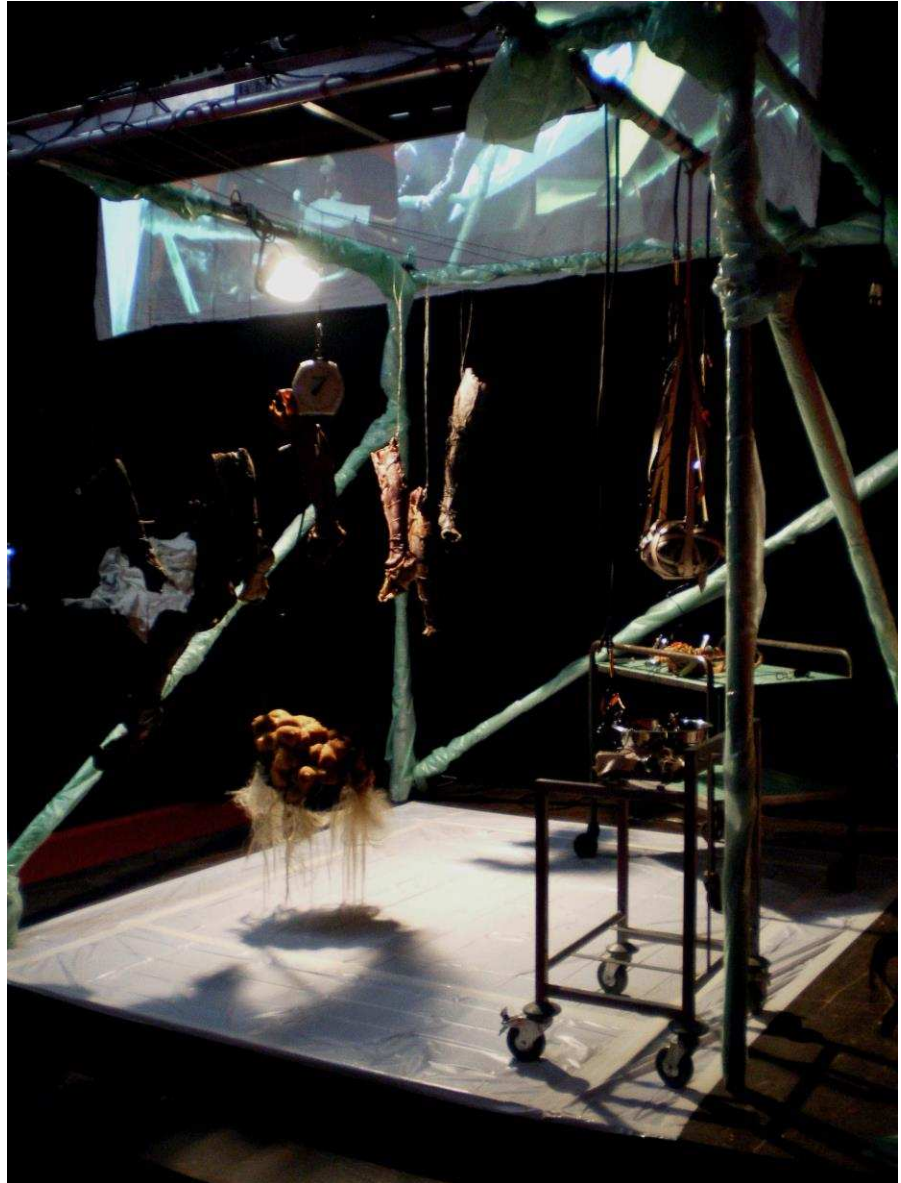


Fig. lxxxv. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

images of props on-screen through a process of “touching” and moving through the orientation of their prosthesis. This might be interpreted as a process in which touch preceded looking and necessarily informed looking. Upon reflection, I think that participants’ interaction synchronically informed the exchanges between the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image, as the two sites concomitantly affected and effected each other through the prostheses navigation of the actual and virtual props on-screen. In Haraway’s words:

Feminist embodiment, then, is not about fixed location in a reified body, female or otherwise, but about nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning. Embodiment is significant prosthesis.³⁴⁰

Perhaps participants with their *significant prosthesis* (camera) could be posited as the interlocutor between the two different sites. Participants' prosthesis seemed to cohere as the mobile yet locatable instance and site of exchange that inter-related the two sites. In order to further interpret *(f)low visibility* this process, I reflect on the spatial distinctions between the images on-screen and the audience in terms of theories on cinematic experience in order to further explore how a feminised process of spatiality may have arisen in *(f)low visibility*.

Comparing Baudry's notion of narrative construction in relation to the narrative construction of the installation in the nightclub, *(f)low visibility* was perceivably constituted through the interaction with prosthesis between the two sites. The difference between *(f)low visibility* and Baudry's notion of the cinematic experience is one of transfer between different spatial and temporal contexts: between the location of the image captured in relation to the rendition of the image captured. The disconnect of spatial and temporal contexts within cinematic experience is rooted in the interventions within the footage in films' post-production, primarily situated in the intervention between the image captured by the camera and its presentation on the screen to the spectator. Film is situated as significantly marking the absence of live and immediate rendition of the image. Baudry claims that the film's narrative works on the spectators' passive viewing, situating the spectators as slaves to a dead narrative. Baudry's approach not only confounds the question of potential liveness but also ignores the possibility of the viewers' embodiment of cinema/film, in terms of their perception and experience of the cinema/film as proposed by Sobchack.

In *(f)low visibility* the image captured and the images' transference to the on-screen site occurred within the spatial proximity to the screen which

³⁴⁰ Haraway, D.J. *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. In: *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p. 195.



Fig. lxxxvi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

immediately relayed the live image for participants and audience reception. Though live-feeds always technically have a delay this was not perceptible in the images' rendition and participants' and audience's reception of the image on the screen. The prostheses' image capture and image transfer to the projectors onto the screen occurred in front of each other, collapsing the spatial and temporal contexts of imaging by the participants on-screen, in terms of the audience reception of the images in *(f)low visibility*; this is perhaps not only a question of de-centering the look of the camera and the audience. In the installation at the nightclub the audience's (non participating viewer) look was disrupted through viewing the two sites, as their look shifted between the two sites. Their look was also fragmented (because of the four projections on the screen) which meant that they could identify partially locatable image perspectives from participants' orientation of their prosthetic camera. More

importantly, the camera was not a singular autonomous eye capturing participants from a fixed perspective; it was mobile and multiple and combined with the body (the hand) of the participants. Putting the camera on the hand of participants not only potentially ruptured the maintenance of the eye and lens configuration in audience reception of the image it also could be regarded as registering the image at the site of the (participant's) body's responsive orientation through the image itself, which I propose was composed as a corporeally driven image through a feminised process of spatiality. Putting the camera on the participants' hands potentially shifted the possibility for a unified, singular perspectival mode of looking. Since the eye not only had to locate the object of their look but also had to direct the unfolding images on-screen, their eye did not have only one focus but was split between locating the object of the look and navigating the image on-screen. I therefore propose that the participants navigated doubly between these two looks, meaning that the (male) gaze of the participants was potentially disrupted and undone because of their relation to the prosthetic camera.

Although participants' and audience's reception of *(f)low visibility* are markedly different to a viewer's cinematic experience, I think that Sobchack nevertheless proposes a relation between viewing and the image in cinematic experience which is relevant to further unpacking participants'/audience's spatial relation in the installation. This develops my proposition that audience/participants met in two spaces at once in *(f)low visibility*. The notion of meeting in two spaces at once is similar to Sobchack's notion of an embodied and enworlded cinematic vision that emerges through the experience of the film through exchanges between the spectator and the film image. The film 'possesses sense by means of its senses, and it makes sense as a "living cohesion," as a *signifying subject*'.³⁴¹ I propose that the exchanges between the images and participants activated inter-relational exchanges between both sites

³⁴¹ Sobchack, V. *The Address of the Eye*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1992), p. 23.



Fig. lxxxvii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

at the same time and therefore composed the installation's reception as a potentially double process:

- for the participant, their image was composed by their navigation of the installation,
- the images for audience reception were received on-screen.

Rather than as two sites that cannot be identically occupied at once, I propose that in *(f)low visibility* there was a doubled site and double reception of the image. This relation could not be identically occupied in either case because though these two forms of reception of the image occurred at the same time participants' and audience's relation to the image was significantly different. I think that although the two sites were connected through participants (and their prosthetic camera) that the scaffolding-area and the screen remained separate in *(f)low visibility*. Sobchack explains that this constitutes perception in the meeting of subject and object, as 'both film and spectator are capable of viewing and of being viewed, both are embodied in the world as the subject of vision and

object for vision'.³⁴² In Sobchak's theorising both the spectator and the film exchange between these two separate visual acts. Although they are linked through the visual they never occupy the same place. In *(f)low visibility* the audience and participants were equally exposed to viewing and being viewed by each other. However, I do not think that they registered each other through viewing each other between the scaffolding-area and the audience's area; rather they encountered each other through the on-screen image, as this seemed to be where they focused their attention. I think that Sobchack's explication of embodiment as experienced in the visible (in relation to cinematic experience/perception) is similar to Haraway's discussion of partiality. Though in the participants' and audience's reception both sites remain separate, different, their positions between scaffolding-area and, more importantly, the screen, were locatable in the installation. I think that through this process participants and audience perceived and experienced a form of feminised spatiality through a process of "touching" the on-screen image because participants drove the imaging process with their hand. Reflecting further on Sobchack's discussion on film viewing, I propose that in *(f)low visibility* although the participants/audience and moving images are not the same in their form, the exchanges between them can still be interpreted as embodied ones. It is because of the difference/distance between the scene and the screen that I can claim that embodiment in the register of the feminine actively occurred in the audience's reception of the installation at the nightclub. As participants and audience inter-related through an embodied exchange with each other in the on-screen image, I propose that this set-up prevented the representation of the feminine from becoming too close to her own image, and collapsing into it, as she is already image, the point is to distance her from it in an audience's reception.

This process of distancing often occurred whilst participants videoed a prop and watched it on-screen, as the light might have changed or the details on the screen may have blurred. In response to this the participants situated

³⁴² Ibid.



Fig. lxxxviii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

themselves differently in relation to the props, in an attempt to either stabilise the on-screen images or to investigate the disruption and fragmentation of the images further. What I am attempting to foreground here is that in either case participants worked from the predicate of the images' inherent instability on-screen. The constant reconfiguration of relations and exchanges between the contents ruptured the continuity of *(f)low visibility* and constituted it as a production of disrupted and fragmented images on-screen. These images were difficult to read and interpret through a phallogocentric register. I propose that the images on-screen were not received as a site to be read, but rather as a site that composed partial yet inter-related spaces for encountering the feminine as a potential method for mapping a feminised process of spatiality.

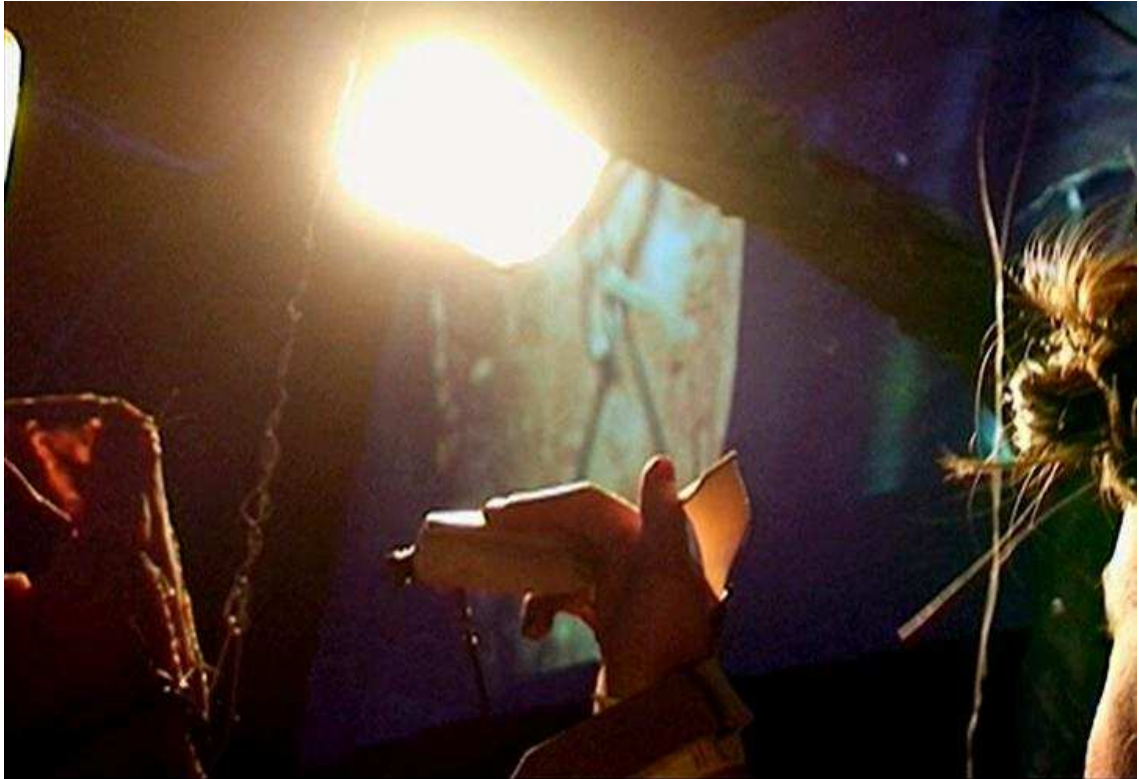


Fig. lxxxix. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

The distinction of forms is not exactly separate, however, It is only separate in terms of its spatiality as both sites informed each other's activity.³⁴³ I think that the audience's relation to the scene of *(f)low visibility* is similar to the way that Sobchack describes the double embodied movement between film and spectator: 'simultaneously engaged in *two* quite distinctly located visual acts that meet on shared ground but never identically occupy it'.³⁴⁴ Interpreting this notion through *(f)low visibility*, I think that the two sites were not configured as copies of each other, one site did not masquerade as, or trace, the other site; but rather each was maintained as different in the audience's reception. Each site could only be partially constituted, mapped, through the other by the audience. The mutual constitution of both sites in the scene of *(f)low visibility* unfolded differently for the audience and participants, which I suggest composed the

³⁴³ Auslander, P. *Liveness*. London: Routledge, (2010).

³⁴⁴ Sobchack, V. *The Address of the Eye*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1992), p. 23.

installation's reception through a feminised cartographic process. I propose that both sites and all four projections were composed for, available to, and received by the audience; whereas participants focussed on navigating the scaffolding-area and one image on-screen.

(f)low visibility was not subject to post-production (in the traditional sense) in terms of film and analog/digital video³⁴⁵ because the live-streams of video-captured by participants was not recorded. As a live mode of capture, though, the digital medium was transmitted as information, 'it doesn't necessarily follow that because the digital medium experiences its objects symbolically (1's and 0's), so too must the human viewer'.³⁴⁶ Notably, Marks approaches viewer's interaction with the video image as not being experienced as a site to decode (to read), but, rather, as a site to perceive and embody in response to the (video) medium. According to Marks, embodiment happens through synaesthetic perception, 'translating information among modalities, is a kind of embodied thinking that can be accomplished by a translation program acting on a database'.³⁴⁷ The video medium in *(f)low visibility* is not contained in a database, or organised sequentially by an external intervention (e.g. a laptop, etc.); what was captured by the participants' prostheses (cameras) was displayed directly onto the screen without recording or recoding the output of capture.

In Marks' interpretation 'embodied thinking' is analogous to a 'translation program acting on a database'.³⁴⁸ Marks parallels the human body with the video machine database, situating both as forms of memory: as processors of information collecting and connecting memory. I think that Marks' approach to the relation between the body and the machine is comparable with Haraway's

³⁴⁵ (There were photographs and video recordings of the overall scene of the installation which did not involve and were separate to the live-feeds produced by *(f)low visibility*). The documentation of *(f)low visibility's* installation in the nightclub is made up of these video recordings and can be found in Appendix 1.

³⁴⁶ Marks, L. U. *Video's Body, Analog and Digital*. In: *Touch*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), p. 149.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 147 – 159.

concept of embodiment of machine prostheses as a process that can potentially partially shape perception, which participates in the quest to afford *cyborg* images. In Marks' approach, the embodiment of the machine apparatus concerns the viewer's delivery to and immersion in the filmic image, whereby the viewer's perception is symbiotically built with the film's depths and surfaces. I, however, am more inclined towards Haraway's account of embodiment of the machine. In Haraway's account the agents/actors do not deliver themselves to the apparatus, but the apparatus becomes a part of their body, meaning that the agents can always act from their own sense of agency and positionality. I think that in Marks' notion of embodiment there is a danger of the perceiver endlessly externalising their encounter with the apparatus in order to commingle with and touch its surface in the film image on the screen. I think that Haraway postures the possibility for a more interiorised form of touching with the prosthetic machine, which I will further develop through Irigaray's concept of intrauterine perception in the section *Monstrous Cyborg Images: the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision*.

Though the touching may not have literally occurred in participants' interaction with the props in *(f)low visibility* (as I had imagined in *Parts 1* and *2* of the thesis), another form of touching was in action in the interaction: a "touching" with the eye, with the hand, with the lens of the camera on the participant's hand, as participants moved their prosthesis over the props without looking at, towards, or through the camera. They slowly moved their hands over the props whilst they looked towards the screen. I propose that the process of touching and feeling through the process of imaging was orientated by the props' representation of the monstrous maternal-feminine. I propose in greater detail in the following section that this composed *(f)low visibility* as a process of feminine perception and spatiality. In the next section I also elaborate on the feminist phenomenological approach that I am using to expand on the concept of touch.

Towards Feminine Perception and Spatiality

In the previous section I introduced my analysis of *(f)low visibility*. I compared and contrasted the installation's process of image production and reception by participants and audience (non participating viewers) as a process of touching with Baudry's notion of the viewer's reception of the cinematic apparatus in cinematic experience as a relation of looking, and with Marks' and Haraway's notions of embodiment as a process of touching the film image which is usually predicated on looking. I now discuss the theoretical framework which I think grounds my claim for the participants' and audience's reception in the register of maternal-feminine perception and spatiality in *(f)low visibility*. Though this aspect has already been introduced in my analysis of interaction and reception of *(f)low visibility* and the spectator's (potentially) embodied relation to the apparatus/film (image), it will now be explained in detail through a feminist phenomenological approach in order to elaborate on the feminine's process of touching and to situate my interpretation of *(f)low visibility* from a gyneacentric perspective. This section aims to establish my theoretical approach to embodied interaction with the imaging apparatus in order to propose and situate the fragmentation, disruption and deformation of reception of on-screen images in *(f)low visibility* as a (maternal-) feminine process of perception and spatiality. This approach is then fully developed in the concluding section of the thesis: *Monstrous Cyborg Images: the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision*). To begin with I focus on various feminist theories (Marks, Sobchack and Irigaray) that develop on Merleau-Ponty's unfinished manuscript, *Visible and Invisible*. I propose to refigure the process of embodiment, especially with regard to the visible, I focus in-depth on Irigaray's proposition for maternal-feminine enfleshed perception as a way to sexually differentiate perception. I depart from the concept of embodiment as a predicate to the visual, establishing how touch/felt/tangible come before and necessarily compose the visible, through Irigaray's critique of phallogocentrism.

I begin by analysing Marks' notion of the *haptic erotic* as a process in which the draw to the screen is based on the viewer affecting cinematic perception. *(f)low visibility* does not have an other that writes the video, the video – the image on-screen – was perceived and constructed through the live, mediated and performance context of participation. There is a critical difference between *(f)low visibility* and Marks' notion of cinematic perception. While Marks suggests that in the cinematic experience of the haptic erotic the audience is pulled into the erotic specular play of surfaces and depths in a film/video, *(f)low visibility* invests the constitution of the video surfaces and depths by the participants' impact on the mediated surface and depths of the image capture. The structuration of *(f)low visibility* is different to cinema, film, and video in terms of its surface and depth spatiality and through its active participation and altered situation of the audience's reception of the image.

Discourses on haptics are problematic as they structure the visible and the tangible as senses that can be mapped through the body in the same way.³⁴⁹ In my interpretation, Merleau-Ponty maintains the logic of seeing through the processes of possession of the other through the (male) gaze; it is through the other's seeing that another is constituted through the visible. According to Merleau-Ponty's notion, the visible and touching are posed as similar senses in the same body, that are seen by others in the world.

It is not a simple thing *seen* in fact (I do not see my back), it is visible by right, it falls under a vision that is both ineluctable and deferred. Conversely, if it touches and sees, this is not because it would have the visibles before itself as objects: they are about it, they even enter into its enclosure, they are within it, they line its looks and its hands inside and outside. If it touches them and sees them, this is only because, being of their family, itself visible and tangible, it uses its own being as a means to participate in theirs, because each of the two beings is an archetype for the other.³⁵⁰

I think that Merleau-Ponty's notion of the visible is problematic as it maintains that the other has power when seeing an other:

Whether in describing a detail of a landscape or in coming to agreement about an invisible truth—makes us feel we are two witnesses capable of hovering

³⁴⁹ See: Marks, L. U. *The Skin of the Film*. London: Duke University Press, (2000); Marks, L. U. *Touch*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, (2002); Merleau-Ponty, M. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Boston: Northwestern University Press, (1968); Sobchack, V. *The Address of the Eye*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (1992).

³⁵⁰ Merleau-Ponty, M. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Boston: Northwestern University Press, (1968), p. 137.

over the same true object, or at least of exchanging our situations relative to it, as we can exchange our standpoints in the visible world in the strict sense.³⁵¹

Irigaray questions his position: ‘Someone must see me, so that I can be possessed by whoever sees me’.³⁵² In her critique of Merleau-Ponty’s manuscript Irigaray proposes that, at times, the body is not visible but can still, crucially, be felt from within and without. Irigaray postulates that the body’s perception is constituted through the tangible on the side of the maternal-feminine.³⁵³ I concur with Irigaray’s theorising as I think that the visible and touch/tangible are mapped differently, as both senses are not only structured differently through the body but also through perception. I will be pursuing an Irigarayan sensibility to critique the relations between touch and vision and the problems with their haptic pairing. Irigaray proposes that the potential for intrauterine envelopment of the pre-nascent body by the maternal-feminine means that the pre-nascent body is perceived through a process of touching by the mother prior to vision/seeing the child in the visible field. In my interpretation of Irigaray’s theory of enfleshed intrauterine perception:

- touch is not perceived through light, but light touches before seeing;
- touch precedes vision;
- touch is felt before the visible;
- touch informs the visible.³⁵⁴

I concur with Irigaray’s theoretical position of sexually different perception. I think that this counters haptic discourses that maintain that

³⁵¹ Ibid, p.13.

³⁵² Irigaray, L. *The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, “The Intertwining—The Chiasm”*. In: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 138.

³⁵³ We can agree that there is a situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible. But the two maps are incomplete and do not overlap: the tangible is, and remains, primary in its opening. Its touching on, of, and by means of the other. The dereliction of its ever touching this first touching. Which is true of the visible. And which opens up the question of “God” but in a certain forgetfulness of the primary maternal-feminine’. Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), pp. 135 – 136.

³⁵⁴ ‘—I do not see the source of light that allows me to see. I sense it, often when I forget about it. — I do not see the sound source that allows me to hear; I sense it. — I do not see my body, or only a little. — I do not see that in which I caress; the caress always takes place in a milieu which is its “proper” milieu, which remains invisible; the most tangible of the tangible or the tangible “itself” does not see itself’. Ibid. pp. 136 – 137.

touching and the visible are reversible – I argue that they are not reversible, as discerned by Irigaray:

Of course there is a relation of the visible and the tangible. Is the doubling redoubled and crisscrossed? This is less certain. The look cannot take up the tangible. Thus I never see that in which I touch or am touched. What is at play in the caress does not see itself. The in-between, the middle, the medium of the caress does not see itself. In the same way and differently, I do not see that which allows me to see, that which touches me with light and air so that I see some “thing” [...] The visible and the tactile do not obey the same laws or rhythms of the flesh.³⁵⁵

For Irigaray the visible and touch/tangible do not affect each other in the same way. Touching is primary and comes before vision; it emerges in the womb through the ‘immersion in intrauterine touching’.³⁵⁶ The first experience and perception of touching is immersive in the mother. The mother envelops the pre-nascent body of an other within her body. Intrauterine touching comes before the visible and seeing and does not need to be bathed in light to be felt. Touching does not necessarily have to participate in the visible in order to be felt, for the body can always be felt but may not necessarily be visible; critically, though, touching informs the visible. ‘And it remains that I see only by the touch of light, and my eyes are situated in my body. I am touched and enveloped by the felt even before seeing it’.³⁵⁷ According to Irigaray the tangible is felt from within and without and in-between the body and the world.

According to Irigaray touching/tangible are more immersive on the side of the maternal-feminine than in man, as she has the *potential* to carry an invisible other (a pre-nascent body) within her. I am proposing that the maternal-feminine maintains a deeper relation with her interior body than man, who has a predicate to the exterior of the body. Merleau-Ponty’s structuration of the visible through the marker of exteriority, in terms of the other’s possession (and capture) through the visible landscape, is an exemplary model of the phallogocentric tendency to affirm the subject through exteriorised vision. Being seen by an other occurs through the usurpation of the other’s gaze. According to Irigaray, ‘for Western philosophers such as Sartre or Merleau-Ponty, seeing is not a way of

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 135.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 136.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 138.

contemplating but of seizing, dominating and possessing, in particular the body of an other'.³⁵⁸ 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty talks about carnal love as a sort of master-slave struggle regarding the domination of the nakedness of the other through our eyes'.³⁵⁹ I think that Irigaray's comments on this problem of phalloculocentric gaze can be linked to Haraway's approach to the order of the visible. Haraway maintains that the visible is badly structured in the body and the world because of the visible's tendency to take over: 'The Western eye has fundamentally been a wandering eye, a travelling lens'.³⁶⁰ Here Haraway takes issue with the problems set-up by the visible, principally in terms of the disconnect between what is seen and what is visible.³⁶¹ The visible, in phalloculocentrism, seems to amble over exteriors without touching them. The visible seems to be encountered through a glazed gaze, a gaze that wanders and glides over things: the visible is opaque, screened, a black spot.³⁶² The gaze is always subject to blanks and invisibilities which perhaps is where the feminine negative might be situated: in the gaps of the visible? This question concerns the gaps in the reception and composition of the on-screen images in *(f)low visibility's* installation at the nightclub, which, as I will elaborate upon in the final section of the conclusion, may be regarded as a potentially feminine process of spatiality and perception.

Irigaray underscores the problems of a disembodied approach to the visible by situating the eyes back in the body, a body that inevitably dies, yet it is not a death in terms of a post-mortem dissection, or through a return to

³⁵⁸ Irigaray, L. Irigaray and Fielding: Invisible Interlacing Between Fleshes. In: Conversations. London: Continuum, (2008) p.109.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 116.

³⁶⁰ Haraway, D. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. In: Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p.192.

³⁶¹ A distinction between what is seen and what is visible is developed in Sobchack's work on embodied cinematic experience. Sobchack developed her work in response to Merleau-Ponty's work on the subject in relation to things, others, etc. As the relations between different subjects and things haptically constitute the human body, the body is informed by the senses synesthetically. Hence, the viewer and object of vision constitute each other, as both are present in the viewing field. They compose each other through their relation, constituting each other through their exchange Marks, L. U. Touch. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2002), p. 13. This is a relation between what is seen, which occurs from outside the body, and what is visible, which occurs inside the body. For example, the seer is the other that sees you from outside, from without, what is visible happens from within the body and constitutes a person's perspective; both the seen/visible are in relation forming the subject from within and without. Merleau-Ponty, M. The Intertwining—The Chiasm. In: The Visible and the Invisible. Boston: Northwestern University Press, (1968), pp.130 – 155.

³⁶² Lacan, J. Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. London: Vintage, (1998), p. 97.

biological determinism. Death is suggested through the body's burial of the eyes in Western Judeo-Christian phallogocentrism as a body that perceives through its senses in a (patriarchal) epistemological darkness. 'With regard to the movement of my eyes, they do not take place uniquely within the visible universe: they also happen in the living crypt of my body and flesh'.³⁶³ Here Irigaray takes back the body from phallogocentrism by acknowledging the visible's structuration. Irigaray puts the eyes back into the body (rather than maintaining God's invisible yet all-seeing power). Irigaray brings the eyes back into the body towards embodied perception. Moreover, she crucially constitutes the eyes as being part of the flesh: 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty does not forget only the flesh that precedes vision but also the flesh present in vision. When I talk about the tactile in seeing itself, I try to remember that the flesh intervenes in vision'.³⁶⁴

Irigaray argues for the enfleshing of vision on the side of the maternal-feminine as a way to distinguish seeing in (sexual and) sexuate difference. This distinction is made in order to compose a discourse of the feminine in relation to the visible without constructing the woman as another surface to glide over, without further subjecting woman to the phallic gaze and limiting her to the silencing tendencies of the gazes' capacity to objectify and compose woman as image and possession, which maintains her in a pre-symbolic state. Irigaray argues for feminine perception through the touch/tactile/caress/felt in the register of the tangible as a prerequisite to the visible. In this way Irigaray effectively argues for the division between the perception of: the feminine and the masculine, woman and man, and of the mother and the father, to structure subjectivity and language without the *law of the father* dominating these. My interpretation of Irigaray's positioning of the feminine – mother – woman:

- Irigaray stakes a position for woman to emerge differently as a

³⁶³ Irigaray, L. *The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm"*. In: *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 138.

³⁶⁴ Irigaray, L. *Irigaray and Fielding: Invisible Interlacing Between Fleshes*. In: *Conversations*. London: Continuum, (2008), p. 108.

subjectivity in relation to the visible through the tangible, accessed through the maternal-feminine.

- In order to go against the rational project of the visible and to constitute it in difference against the phallogocentric order of the visible in its assemblage of things, others, etc., in the world; to manifest these relations between things in the world in a feminised way, vis-à-vis feminised space and time.
- Combining both of the above notions, Irigaray intertwines feminine subjectivity and feminised space and time through the tangible as that which cannot be discerned necessarily through the polarities of interiority and exteriority of the body; but rather might emerge between interiority and exteriority.

It is important to identify and divide my interpretations of Irigaray's work on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological existential approach to visibility in order to establish the grounds for my conclusion in the next section. I analyse *(f)low visibility* through notions of vision in the register of the tangible as the feminine's (subject) perception in terms of space and time. I approach the composition of *(f)low visibility* as a critique of the construction of the feminine as an image of male desire. I propose that the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub departs from this structuration of the feminine by way of the on-screen images' fragmented representation of the (maternal-) feminine. I propose that due to the images referencing the feminine through a process of fragmentation, the reception of images on-screen discord a haptic configuration. The analysis of the artwork is proposed in terms of its production and reception as a form of feminine: fragmented and deformed perception, rather than masculine: holistic, continuous and intelligible vision. I situate the emergence of *(f)low visibility* in spaces of discontinuity, absence and disruption of its production and reception; as moments of invisibility constituted by the feminine negative between the contents of *(f)low visibility*, principally in the disruptive gaps that composed the on-screen images. I discuss how the feminine negative might emerge actively by disrupting the continuity of the visible image in *(f)low visibility*'s installation at the nightclub (refer to *Diagram 4*). The next section claims that a feminised process of

spatiality might have arisen through the composition of the installation at the nightclub as a feminised cartographic process of reception.

Monstrous Cyborg Image: the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision

In this concluding section to *(f)low visibility* my analysis moves further into a gyneacentric perspective, so as to elaborate on a feminine image which actively emerges as a process of the feminine negative in the on-screen image. I intertwine Irigaray's concept of maternal-feminine intrauterine perception with Haraway's concept of the cyborg image. By intertwining their antithetical theories I intend to claim that potentially the process of embodied (participant and audience) reception of the on-screen image was composed between interior (monstrous) and exterior (cyborg) process of imaging in the register of feminine perception and spatiality in *(f)low visibility*. I propose that a process of fragmentation and deformation of the (male) gaze and phalloculocentric organisation of the visible occurred in the production, navigation and reception of the on-screen image in the installation at the nightclub. I think that the fragmentation of the on-screen images in *(f)low visibility* compelled a form of feminine syntax in the composition and reception of the image, composing images which were difficult to read and interpret. I propose that although the on-screen images were composed through a process of feminine referentiality they still actively held meaning through the power of feminine gesture. I propose that the images on-screen did not represent the feminine but rather allowed for an experience of the feminine negative which occurred in the disruption of the viewing process of the image on-screen.

Though Irigaray and Haraway are dialectically antithetical, I couple some aspects of their theories through my analysis of the diagrams and *(f)low visibility's* installation. Before elaborating on my approach towards coupling their oppositional differences, in relation to participant interaction with and audience reception of the images on the screen in the installation at the nightclub, I explain how radically opposed their theories are. In Haraway's account of embodiment, embodiment is made possible because the maternal is rejected. In

Irigaray's theorising, the maternal is precisely what gives rise to enfleshed perception. For Haraway, embodiment concerns enjoining the machine world, 'cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves'.³⁶⁵ Haraway specifically counters the role of the mother as a problem of reproduction. She explains that cyborgs have the capacity to regenerate themselves and therefore are the necessary out from sexual difference's binary clause established in biological determinism (in Freud's theorising). Haraway argues that in order for sexual difference to be undone, women should not have to define themselves in terms of their capacity to reproduce. Irigaray, meanwhile, sustains sexually different perception. In Irigaray's theorisation of the maternal-feminine's potential to carry an invisible other within, this potential is situated as a process that composes perception, not necessarily as the event of an actuality (of actual pregnancy). Although in Irigaray's theorising on the maternal-feminine the potential to carry an invisible other within is posited as a *potentiality* this notion is nevertheless systemically gyneacentric. Irigaray and Haraway significantly differ on the issue of the natural and artificial, the human and non-human. Notably, Irigaray argues for an absolutely natural becoming of woman that remains human. Haraway however, specifically counters this (dual) position and entreats an approach towards women's potential fusion with prostheses. Haraway discusses embodiment as a process which can liberate the constraints of sexual difference whilst maintaining (cyborg) difference, calling for the 'illegitimate fusions of animal and machine'.³⁶⁶

I interpret Haraway's proposal for embodiment as externalising, i.e. embodiment of an external (animal/machine) body that constitutes partially locatable bodies. This is a partiality that does not depend on the logic of legibility inscribed in phallocentrism. 'Cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all

³⁶⁵ Haraway D. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p. 181.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 176.

meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism'.³⁶⁷ Haraway proposes that connections between different (embodiments of machine animal) bodies could map 'power and identity'³⁶⁸ differently. Haraway suggests that partial and locatable aspects of the cyborg body move beyond a dualistic ontology of man and woman. Irigaray posits perception as sexually different, maintaining a binary logic, yet one in which woman can emerge equally with man in a democracy of two from their respective differences. 'If my words have meaning, it is because they touch the other from the starting point of my perception, and having touched me and touching the other, they organise a possible dwelling for these perceptions'.³⁶⁹ Irigaray proposes that woman perceives from a priori in the tangible. My interpretation of Irigaray's discussion of the tangible is that she suggests that registering sexually different perception might afford an inter-relationality between man and woman that could be maintained through an acceptance of their respective difference.³⁷⁰

Irigaray's and Haraway's positions differ radically on their propositions for women's utopia. However, I think that some general middle ground can be paralleled between them, in terms of enfleshing/embodiment, as a vitalising way to afford a feminised form of perception, by way of inter-relating and connecting so as to encounter the other/machine differently. Within this framework, I couple their distinct oppositions through the thematic semblances in their respective works. Coupling Irigaray and Haraway through the diagrammatical planning and installation of *(f)low visibility* also sets out the feminine's doubling tendencies and alliances. In this conclusion to *(f)low visibility* Irigaray's and Haraway's oppositions are being mapped as a process of feminine movement between her interiority and exteriority as a feminised cartographic process. I am proposing a new way to approach feminine perception/spatiality through their notions of embodiment/enfleshing and inter-relationality/connection. I couple Irigaray's

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 180.

³⁶⁹ Irigaray L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 143.

³⁷⁰ In turn, this process of inter-relationality could enable communication between them. Irigaray therefore proposes 'two different syntaxes', a masculine and feminine syntax'. Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p.132.

theorisation of enfleshed intrauterine perception with Haraway's notion of embodiment of the cyborg image to afford a new way to approach feminine spatiality/perception in my interpretation of *(f)low visibility*. I intertwine Irigaray's notion of the inter-relationality with the other with Haraway's notion of connectivity between animal/machine bodies. I couple connection and inter-relationality through my analysis of the props and their imaging on-screen, participant interaction, audience reception, and their respective positions in relation to each other in *(f)low visibility*. I claim that potentially the on-screen images' composition and reception was registered through a process of touching from within (interior) and without (exterior):

- imaging the interior – was actioned through the monstrous props' images that referenced the interior of the maternal-feminine body in a fragmented way on-screen;
- imaging the exterior – occurred through the embodied *cyborg* camera prosthesis and imaging through video on-screen.

I think that this process devised the on-screen imagery in terms of inter-relationality and connection with an other through touch. I propose that this pull between interiority and exteriority in participants' and the audience's reception emerged as a process of feminine spatiality between the production and (participant and audience) reception of the on-screen image. In order to draw out this process of feminine spatiality further, I will return to my analysis of Irigaray's and Haraway's antithetical concepts, coupling them as follows:

- Irigaray: maternal-feminine enfleshed perception begins from the interior. 'Through which I (male or female) received life and was enveloped in my prenatal sojourn, by which I have been surrounded, clothed, nourished in another body'.³⁷¹
- Haraway: cyborg image embodies through animal fusion with machine

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 130.

body from the exterior (incorporation of the machine) which becomes interiorised and lived through the body. 'The machine is us, our process, an aspect of embodiment'.³⁷²

I am attempting to couple Irigaray's notion of enfleshed interiorised (feminine) perception with Haraway's idea of embodiment of the machine as a form of prosthesis which is exterior to the body but nevertheless fuses with it. I think that what is vital about enfleshed perception is that it comes from maternal-feminine interiority, maintaining feminine perception in terms of the sensible body from a gyneacentric perspective. What is crucial about Haraway's notion of embodiment concerns the body's fusion with an exterior appendage. I think that bringing together Irigaray's concept of enfleshed perception and Haraway's notion of embodiment means that feminine perception can be imagined as occurring between the interior and exterior of the body. I interpret embodiment's composition through adjoining with an exterior appendage, as rooted in the maternal-feminine's (intrauterine) propensity for touch. This is an interiorised bodily envelopment of an other and could be imagined as the predicate to the embodiment of the machine by the (maternal-) feminine, because her relation to enveloping/touching another within means that she can embody the machine. The relation between interiority and exteriority can be interpreted as part of the wider framework of my thesis, in terms of the feminine's double subjective structure which I think is exemplified between the interior immersion in intrauterine touching and appropriation/embodiment/adoption of another (machine) into the body through touching. I think this relation concerns the movement between the 'passage between interior and exterior'³⁷³ of the feminine subjectivity, as a process of her tendency to double her subjectivity. I think that suggesting a feminine process of perception that is formed between the interior and exterior body proposes a possible way to map the gap between interiority and exteriority as a process of the feminine negative. I think that this feminised cartographic mapping occurred

³⁷² Haraway D. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p. 180.

³⁷³ Irigaray L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004).

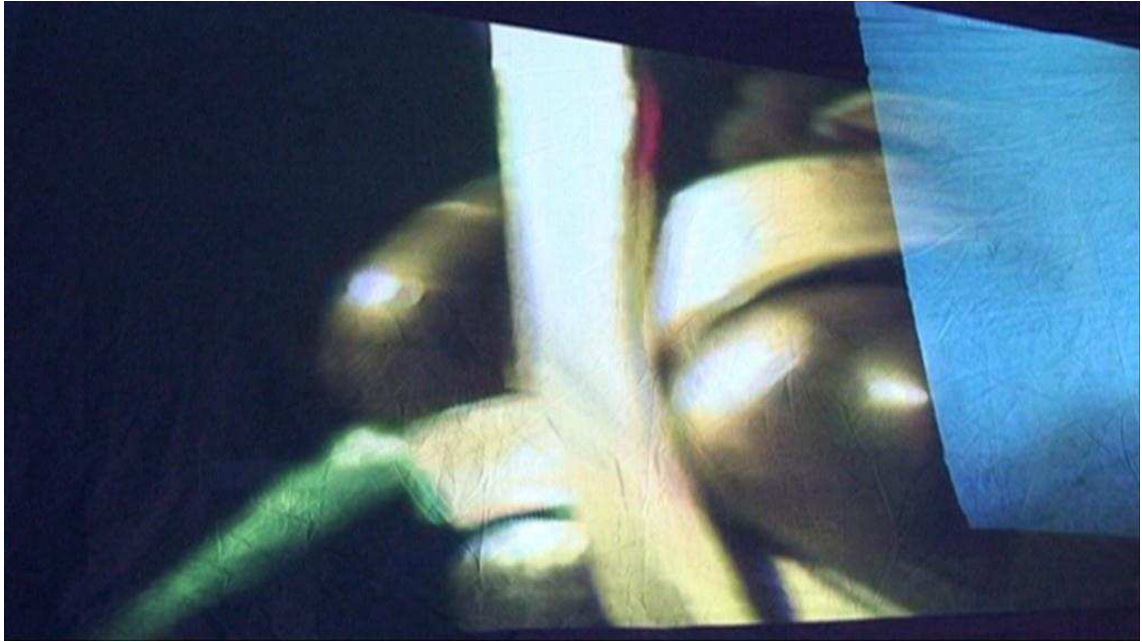


Fig. xc. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

through the participants' orientation of the on-screen image by way of feeling out the image that referenced maternal-feminine interiority with their prosthetic camera, as a process of embodied/enfleshed interaction with the on-screen image. I think that in this way the discontinuities in the composition of the image were due to imaging the props, mapping the feminine negative in the on-screen image as a process of enfleshed/embodied participant perception that emerged between interiority and exteriority in the register of touch in terms of:

- *touching (monstrous) interiority* – participants responded to fragmented images of monstrous bodies that referenced maternal-feminine interiority in the negative on-screen. I think that participants' interaction mapped through the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision in their navigation of the on-screen image through their desire to touch/navigate/image the dark continent (of female sex);
- *touching (cyborg) exteriority* – mapped through exteriorised touching as a

process of participants' embodiment of the machine (the prosthetic camera) and driving the on-screen cyborg image of maternal-feminine interiority.

In this way I think that the feminine negative was mapped through a process that intertwines Irigaray's concept of enfleshed perception and Haraway's notion of embodied perception. A feminised cartographic method in which participant interaction moved between interior touching and exterior touching in their exchanges with the on-screen image. I think this process of interiorised and exteriorised "touching" contributes to my proposed rationale concerning the feminine as a double subjective structure. I think that my proposition for a potentially double feminine subjective structure is also encountered actively in the subjective structure of the hysteric because of her power to deform language, as a process of shifting between outwardly miming images of his desire and inwardly speaking (inaudibly) perpetually to herself.³⁷⁴ Irigaray maintains that the feminine's hysterical tendencies are productive and active; they have a creative power because of her tendency to deform phallogocentrism by way of disrupting the scene of the visible and language through gesturing in excess. I propose that these processes of feminine interiority and exteriority compose my claim for *(f)low visibility* as an emergent process of feminine spatiality/perception in the participants' composition and the audience's reception of the on-screen image, wherein touch mediated the image content as a hysterical (fragmented) gesture by way of imaging feminine interiority. I propose that participant interaction attempted to speak/"touch" the ineffable (the feminine negative) in the on-screen image in *(f)low visibility*. In order to develop this relation between interiority and exteriority in a feminine register in terms of *(f)low visibility*'s composition and reception I expand on Irigaray's and Haraway's theories:

- Irigaray: interiorised enfleshed perception is proposed through the

³⁷⁴ As previously discussed in the section Interactive Installation: Ocular Oracle.

envelopment/perpetual touching of an invisible pre-nascent other within. I think that this marks the maternal-feminine's entry into perception and inter-relationality with another person differently, one which is mapped from the fantasy of intrauterine touching (and not through the visible);

- Haraway: embodiment of the machine means that reproduction is no longer essential. Rather, regeneration (might be monstrous but will be nevertheless potent) between/of animal/machine bodies might afford greater connections that are only partially coded, and locatable but 'in communication with all our parts'.³⁷⁵ Meaning that cyborg bodies are seeking 'the subject position not of identity, but of objectivity; that is partial connection'.³⁷⁶

I am integrating Irigaray's notion of inter-relationality with Haraway's notion of connection to discuss how the image of the feminine is encountered in terms of the paralleling:

- apparatus/screen/image,
- phallus/negative/image.

I propose that this encounter happens through a double process of her subjectivity that moves from interiority to exteriority. Situating feminine perception in an enfleshed/embodied relation means that inter-relationality/connection occurs through exchanges between others and things in the world which relate primarily because of her potential to contain another body within (which is fused with her but is also a separate/extra body or bodies). I think this informs her capacity to fuse with other animal/machine bodies from without (which are enveloped by her but are also separate/extra bodies). As a result, the maternal-feminine is already receptive to others (even cyborgs) because perception begins with interior immersion in intrauterine touching. I think that the idea of perpetual touching of the pre-nascent body in the intrauterine informs the feminine's capacity to envelop the machine/cyborg

³⁷⁵ Haraway D. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. London: Free Association Books, (1991), p.181.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 193.

image, meaning that the cyborg image lends itself to the concept of intrauterine touching which sets the tone for a maternal-feminine register. Furthermore, feminine perception is extended through prosthesis, which I think constitutes her through a doubling of her subjectivity, between interior enfleshing and the embodiment of exterior tools. I think that this process is analogous to the participants' navigation of both sites, the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image, at the installation in the nightclub, with their prosthesis as a process of spatial and perceptual imaging of maternal-feminine interiority on-screen. I interpret this process as one of inter-relationality and connections between the on-screen image of the fragmented monstrous props and the prostheses' imaging of the props (in *(f)low visibility's* installation), by intertwining Haraway's theorising on the cyborg image and Irigaray's concept of the maternal-feminine's enfleshed perception:

- screen: image is proposed as a cyborg image which primarily references a fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision as a disruptive and fragmented image, as a process of making monstrous/cyborg images (which are not distinguishable on-screen); these (monstrous/cyborg images) are intertwined in the on-screen image because participants imaged the monstrous props with their cyborg prosthetic, driving the cyborg image through the fantasy of touching/visioning maternal-feminine interiority in the on-screen image;
- prosthesis: I think that the prosthesis was driven by touching (from within); I posit that participants' interactions unfolded as a fragmented process because the monstrous props set the disrupted tone of their engagement (by repelling and attracting participants because of their monstrousness).

Although participants were equipped with a prosthesis that aided imaging, the focus of the imaging process itself was not maintained by the prosthesis but was driven by the props' representation of maternal-feminine interiority. Therefore I think that the props orientated participant interaction. Moreover, what the props represent set the tone of interaction in the register of the feminine, both perceptually and spatially, in terms of the participants'

composition of the image and navigation of the image. The prosthesis was a tool to elaborate their process of imaging. Whilst participants imaged the surface of the props—they imaged their process of touch—feeling their way around the prop whilst feeling their way through the on-screen image. The participants' look was doubled between the object of the look and their navigation of the on-screen image, meaning that while participants moved their hands over the object, they looked at the screen to navigate their way through their on-screen image and at the same time orientate themselves through the scaffolding-area. (Please refer *Appendix 1*'s DVD documentation of the installation in the nightclub, which evidences this doubling of the participants' gaze and double orientation through both sites).

The coexistent sites failed to cohere; rather, their distinction disrupted inter-relations and connections and composed partial/fragmented maternal-feminine cyborg images on-screen. I think that as a result of the disruptive process of participation and imaging the on-screen images became difficult to interpret in audience reception. As participants imaged the props, the images referenced monstrosities that rolled out in a fragmentary way across the screen, as though participants were imaging and navigating the fantasy of intrauterine "touching". I think that the monstrous cyborg image was incorporated through the orientation of the camera and through the navigation of the two sites by moving through the monstrous cyborg image on-screen that also doubled as the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision. As participants drove the fragmented imaging which did not visually correlate with where they were in the scaffolding-area, I propose that the screen's symbolicity was sent *elsewhere*, processually mapping the feminine negative through the emergence of the ineffable image on-screen. In my interpretation the images on-screen mapped partially locatable (participant) orientations of feminine interiority (through the camera prosthesis) for audience reception. I think that the audience potentially received an experience of "touching" the cyborg image on-screen through their identifactory relation to participants, through their embodiment of the video apparatus.

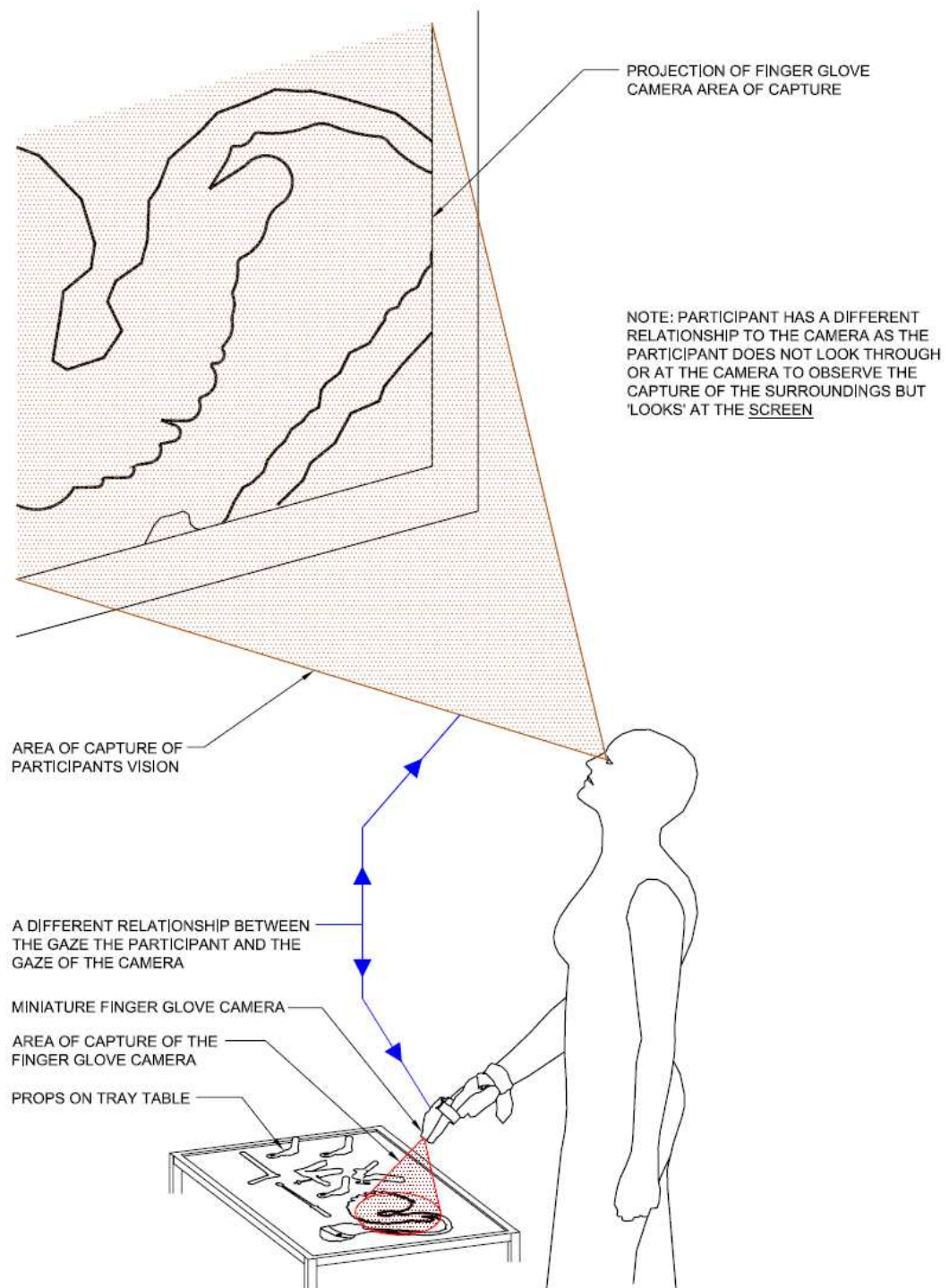


Fig. xci. *Diagram 4* (Schema)

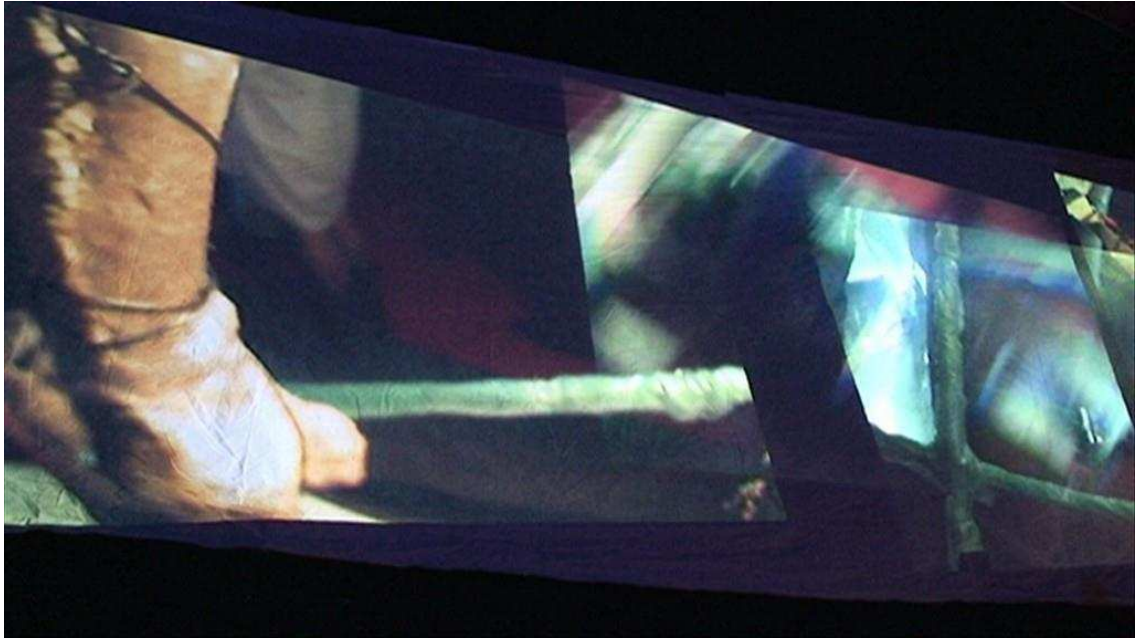


Fig. xcii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

I think that the way in which the image became the locus of participants' attention significantly deforms the look/gaze due to their exploration of the image through touch in *(f)low visibility*. Through my interpretation participants relied on the unstable images on-screen to navigate the monstrous props in the scaffolding-area, rather than peering through the camera (keyhole as a voyeur). In this way the participants navigated two different perspectives simultaneously: that of the camera and their eye. The eye of the camera was guided by their hand moving over the props, which was coordinated by their eye looking towards the screen to simultaneously navigate the on-screen image through a process of tactile looking doubled between scaffolding-area and on-screen image.

I think that participants' perception and reception of images in *(f)low visibility* is necessarily ordered differently to the (male) gaze/look because participants did not look through the camera/keyhole as a way to *screen* their imagined fantasy image. The participant's eye was divided. Moreover, perception was prosthetically aided, between the one (participant with their prosthesis) that "feels" their way around the props and the eye of the participant



Fig. xciii. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

that looks to the on-screen image. I think that navigating the image by moving their hand over the props whilst looking towards the image is founded on the sensible relation of touching and looking, though not in a haptic configuration, rather through a tangible relation to the visible. Touching was maintained at a distance from the image on-screen, as a fantasy of touching/vision the intrauterine in the on-screen image; shifting in a tension between “touching” the image whilst looking at it.

I propose this deconstructs the usual relation of the (male) look/gaze spatially and temporally in *(f)low visibility*. The relation of the gaze/look (according to Sartre and Lacan) is structured as follows: the voyeur peers through a keyhole at an imaginary image of woman; another person comes across the man peering through the keyhole and catches him in the act of voyeurism. In *(f)low visibility* the look of the voyeur is de-centred as participants did not directly look through the camera at an imagined fantasy. Rather the participants’ look/gaze was fragmented in the installation at the nightclub and

was instead driven by the desire to “touch” and look inside the maternal-feminine. The look between the participants’ body/eyes and prosthesis was composed at a distance from each other, these met in their composition of the on-screen image, coming together in a triangulated relation (participant’s body, prosthesis, on-screen image) as a subsequently fragmented relation. Participants seemed to desire the fragmentation of their relation to their location(s) in the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image. Through their fragmented location, perception and orientation of the screen and the scaffolding-area, participants moved through the two sites in the installation concurrently, a symbiosis that was continually disrupted and ruptured through a doubled process of tactile looking. Driven by the exploration of the fantasy of the intrauterine, participants seemed to desire making images through a disruptive process as though they were attempting to image the disruption itself.

Fragmentation did not only occur at the level of interacting with the two distinctly different sites simultaneously and through a process of touching/looking by participants’ navigation between the sites; it also occurred in the apparatus and in the ruptured movements through the two sites in the rendition of the on-screen image. I think that this split engagement was also available to the audience (non participating viewer) even though they did not tend to focus on the scaffolding-area, I propose that the audience split engagement was encountered in the on-screen image in their reception of:

- the four overlapping distorted projected and fragmented images that were composed from two different perspectives (these perspectives being from the participants and the props’ cameras);
- the participants’ and the props’ cameras’ capture which meant that there were four lenses to identify with that navigated the scaffolding-area differently, in a disrupted way.

None of the images on the screen cohered from one singular and absolutely identifiable perspective, because there were two participants in the scaffolding-area at any given time and two props with their view projected on the screen. Though the two props’ (cameras) imaged perspectives remained still for

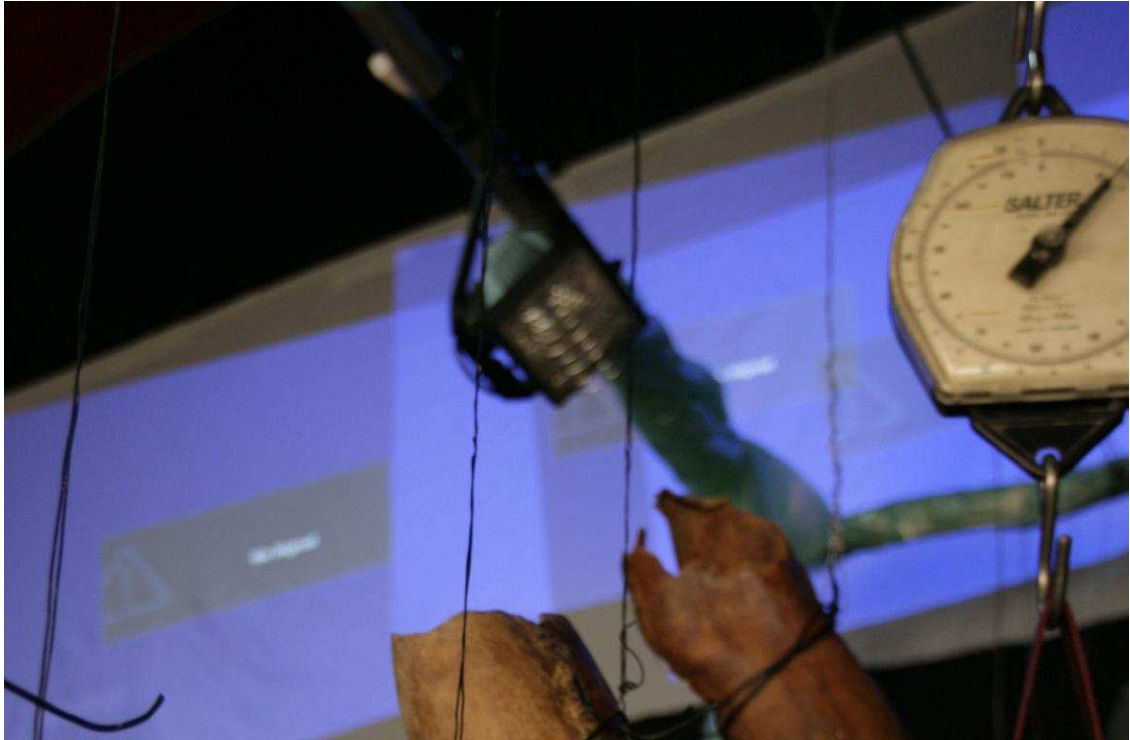


Fig. xciv. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Photograph)

most of the time on the screen, it was unclear whose perspective was being shown to the audience, especially when participants decided to move around the props (that had cameras affixed to them). Therefore I think that the audience encountered the on-screen images through a disrupted relation to looking, they held an identifactory relation with the participants rather than with the camera as the participants' bodies orientated the process of imaging. The audience could not take up the usual eye/lens relation to the camera, rather they identified with "touching"/looking, orientating the process of imaging the on-screen because of the way the images emerged through a process of participants feeling through whilst simultaneously looking at the on-screen image. I think that the audience could relate to the participants' process of feeling through the image because there was a marked distinction between the participants' cameras' live-feed creating moving images on-screen in contrast to the props' often static perspectives on-screen, meaning that the audience could identify the participants' perspectives on-screen. However, at times these separate

perspectives were disrupted when participants (interacted with and) moved the props around, which temporarily structured the image through the register of touch because the props' perspective would (momentarily) become the participants' prosthetic perspective. These alternating perspectives shaped the scene of *(f)low visibility* through a process of "touching"/looking, fragmentation and disruption through:

- the moving cameras,
- moving and static images on-screen,
- shifting and changing of participants,
- the participants' hands imaging the distorted props through the register of touch.

Even though the audience was able to identify the relation between the participants and the on-screen image, this is not to say that their look was not disrupted in this process. Moreover, the identifactory relation with the participants' production of the images facilitated the audience's experience of the on-screen images because the audience could become a participant at any time. Furthermore, the two sites did not mirror each other. However, they were interrelated and connected. This difference in experience of the two sites was another important disruption in the audience's reception of *(f)low visibility's* installation, further dislocating their gaze from the lens of the camera. Therefore *(f)low visibility* would not be suitable to be videoed and presented as a recording of the screen alone, because the disruption of the audience's gaze is dependent on their identifactory relation to the participants and the transparency of the process of making the images. The possibility of shifting the look between the on-screen images and the scaffolding-area is crucial to the audience's experience of the feminine negative on-screen as a process of disruption and deformation of their gaze. As a result it was impossible for the audience's spectatorial position to retain the *centre of the look* in the installation.

I propose that the screen mapped participants' orientation through both sites in an embodied way. The images on the screen fragmented the contents of



Fig. xcv. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

(f)low visibility and the audience's reception of the images further, as the images were distorted, pixelated and overlapping. This presented the screen as an *elsewhere* of the videoed contents, which was distanced further from the site of capture. The screen as an *elsewhere*, however, not by the spot as described by Lacan, or by the carnal world as situated by Merleau-Ponty, or in terms of phallogocentric structuration of the subject and object.³⁷⁷

The images did not run in an orderly way, they were disorientating images. As opposed to marking the distinction between subject and object, between participant and the moving images, the moving images seemed to become an other of the contents of *(f)low visibility*, rather than a 'parallel world' of its contents. Irigaray maintains that it is the relation between others, the exchange between others, which are constituted in invisibilities, and that our relation with our interior does not participate in the visible but in the sensible flesh of our body.

And our interiority neither. The relations between us and the world, us and the other(s) are not visible. If we can perceive something of our interiority and our

³⁷⁷ Irigaray, L. *Listening, Teaching, Thinking*. In: *Teaching*. London: Continuum, (2008), p. 231.

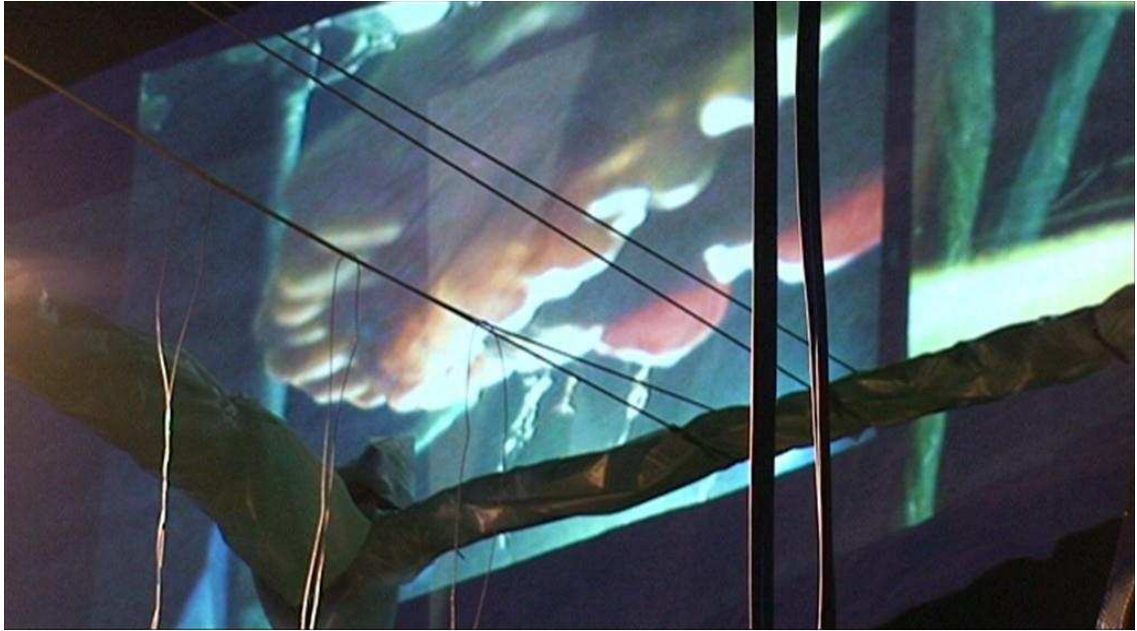


Fig. xcvi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility* (Video Still)

relations with the world or the other(s) through their expression or their effects, they remain invisible as such.³⁷⁸

The images seemed to appear at a distance, marked by their pixelated decay, and as invisibilities, rather than duplicating the contents. As participants moved their prosthesis over the props they got closer to the cyborg skin of the video image.³⁷⁹ The projections were othered as the images disintegrated, presenting another scene as present. Rather than replicating the contents of the scaffolding-area as a hyper-real clean and clear reproducible image, the images were disorientating and could not be replicated because they were built through a process of inter-relationship between the actual and the virtual images representing maternal-feminine interiority for two different audiences: participants and non participating viewers. As a result, the process of looking was split at the level of reception of *(f)low visibility* from the outset, which is why it was important to reveal the workings of the scaffolding-area alongside the screen, as this maintains the split in reception across all sites evenly.

³⁷⁸ Irigaray, L. The Invisible Interlacing between Fleshes. In: *Conversations*. London: Continuum, (2008), p. 114.

³⁷⁹ Marks, L. U. *Touch*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2002).

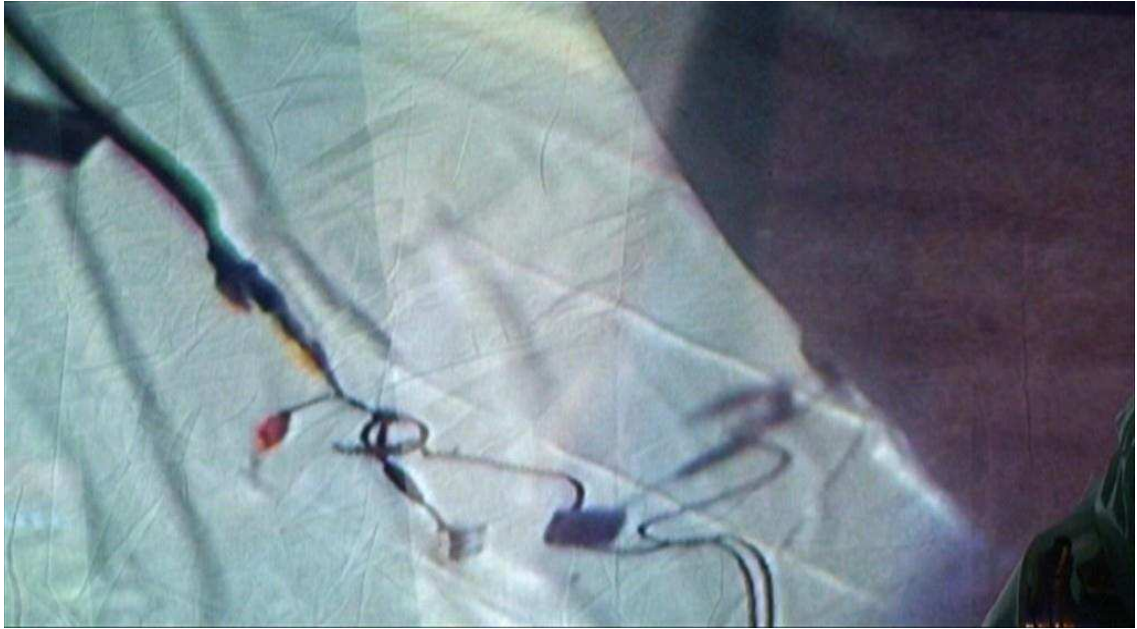


Fig. xcvi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

The projections were monstrously figured, imaging disorientating representations of forms which were difficult to discern. The moving images were not necessarily *intelligible* as repetitions of the real but were *perceivable*³⁸⁰ and could arguably be felt through by the audience reception of the virtual images. I think that a repetition of difference occurred between the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image, as the contents of the scene of the installation were represented differently in the on-screen image. The disruption of the images produced on-screen due to the distinction between sites did not only present a different rendition of the contents of the scaffolding-area; but also composed the process by which the disruption of the images was affected and effected in a variety of ways as a cyborg image composed on-screen through:

- projections layered on the wrinkled screen,

³⁸⁰ 'Can there be a better guarantee of the existence of the other? Of the Other of the Same? For if we define the sexes in this way, are we not brought back to the traditional division between the intelligible and the perceptible? The fact that the perceptible may turn out in the end to be written with a capital letter marks its subordination to the intelligible order. To the intelligible, moreover, as the place of inscription of forms. A fact which must never be known simply. The Other would be subject to inscription without its knowledge'. Irigaray, L. *This Sex which in Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), pp. 100 – 101.

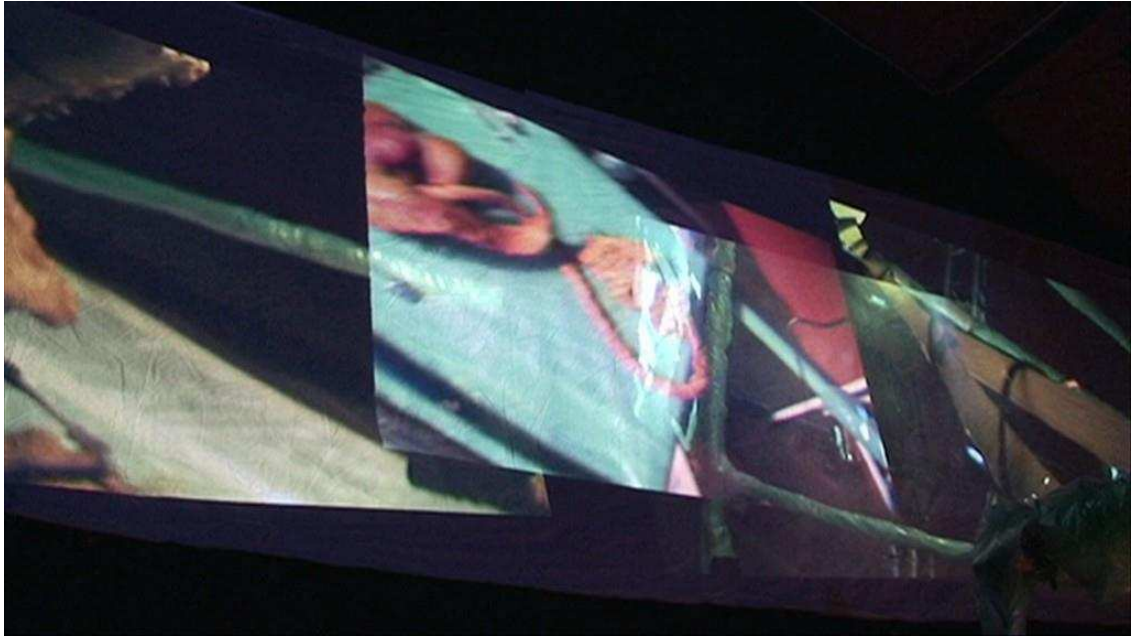


Fig. xcvi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

- angled projectors threw distorted projections,
- images rendered as pixelated fuzz,
- and the disorientating image capture by participants and the props.

Fragments of indiscernible things/bodies were further mutilated through the position of the cameras' capture by participants, e.g. videoing the monstrous props in the scaffolding-area, and the props' cameras' perspective. The props were fragmented between their own camera's perspective and the perspective of the participants videoing them. The props became cut up in the projections, in the close-ups they seemed difficult to read as the complete prop, or as representations of female bodies. They became abstract *monstrous cyborg* bodies, composed and recomposed through the on-screen view of participants' interaction and audience's reception. The fragmentation of the image was affected by the contents of the images, in terms of:

- the images referencing maternal-feminine interiority,
- the images' materiality,
- the images' processual composition driven by participants desire
- and multiple camera perspectives/images received by the audience.

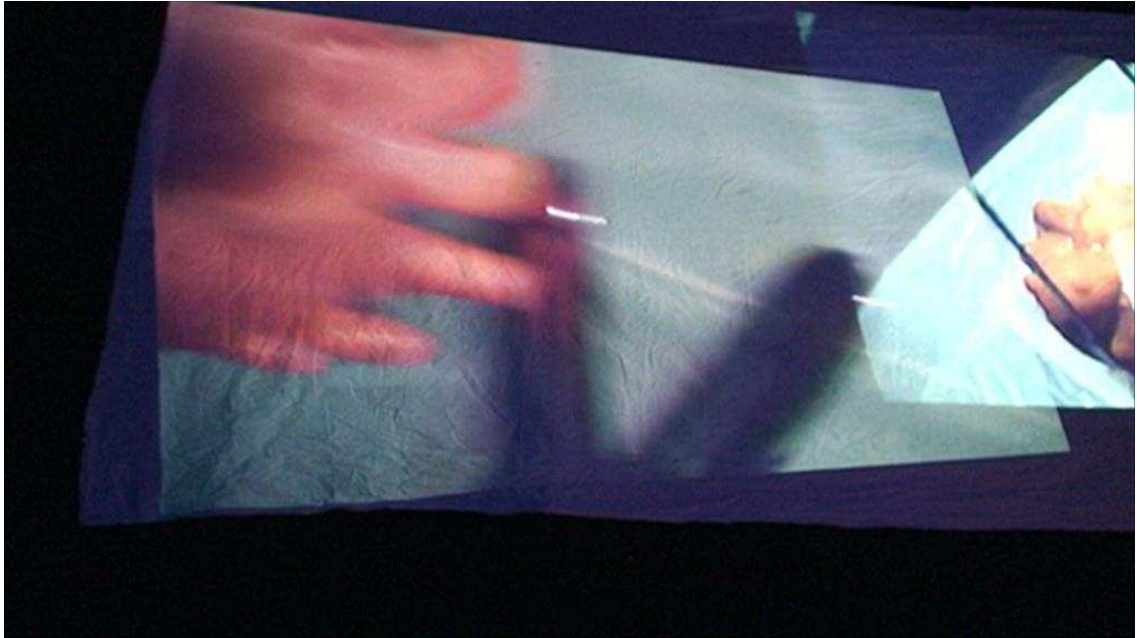


Fig. xcvi. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility* (Video Stills x2)

I propose that these different forms of fragmentation in the production, materiality, and reception of the images marked the images through a process of disruptive excess³⁸¹ on the side of the feminine's capacity to deform the

³⁸¹ 'They should not put it "What is woman?" but rather, repeating/interpreting the way in which, within discourse, the feminine finds itself defined as lack, deficiency, or as imitation and negative image of the



Fig. xcix. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

phallogocentric order of legibility. The images seemed as though they represented an elsewhere, consequently the images were an other of the installation's contents. The surface of the screen manifested doubly in its composition, between the wrinkled skin of the actual screen, and the artificial skin of the props in the virtual image, which occurred because participants distorted the limits of these skins by videoing the props up-close into the pixelated fuzzy skin of the video. Blurred cyborg images of maternal-feminine interiority were thus composed.

The images constantly moved in and out of these reconfigurations – between blurring and focusing – the monstrous cyborg images emerged differently. Often magnified beyond recognition, the props' whole body would suddenly appear only as intermittent flashes. In an attempt to get closer to the screen the participants often attempted to bury their cameras inside the hollows of the props, creating a black screen. The projections showed a black rectangle due to the limited light the apparatus was receiving; it was as though

subject, they should signify that with respect to this logic a disruptive excess is possible on the feminine side'. Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 78.

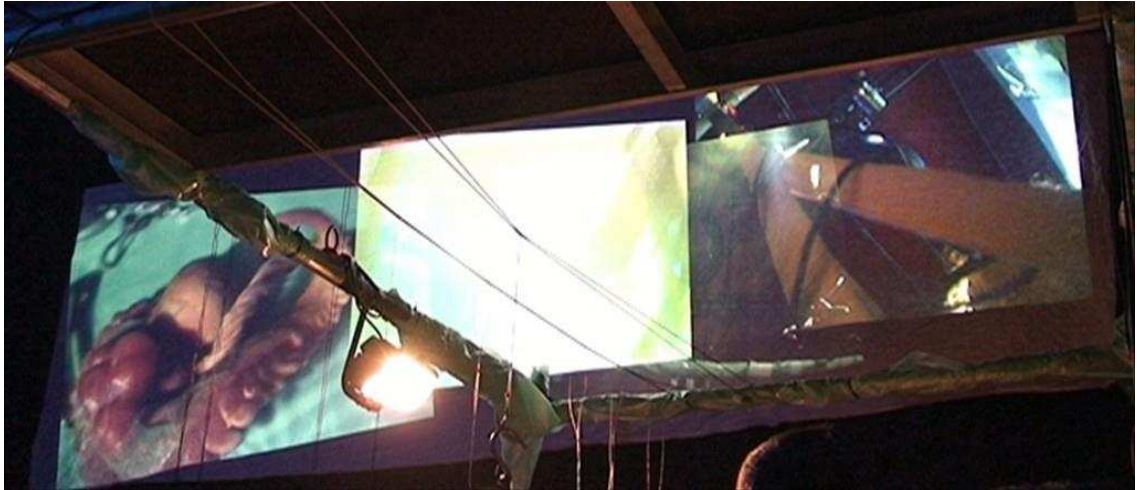


Fig. c. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

participants were attempting to probe deeper into her body, thereby probing further into the ineffable image of the maternal-feminine on-screen, as a desire to know her interiority, to touch and look at the dark continent of her sexuality. The images on the screen were constantly othered in this process – not as pure representation of the props (as these were further fragmented in the on-screen image), but as a draw towards an other, through a different kind of entry into its contents, through an elsewhere of its contents, where the contents could emerge differently without affecting the actual (props rather than digital) contents of the artwork from a gyneacentric perspective.

This emergence of the fragmented structure of *(f)low visibility* was constructed through the immaterial interaction and reception of its contents, for the subject's perception always remains invisible in relation to an other. The audience and participants were capable of viewing and being viewed respectively, (and though they could not see from the position that the other looks at them in the visible) these viewing positions were not composed through this relation in the installation at the nightclub. Participants and audience seemed predominantly to focus on images on the screen, rather than on viewing each other. The discordance of the scene was structured through the gaps, an elsewhere, spatially and temporally accenting the same moment differently between the screen and the scaffolding–area, a process which I suggest was



Fig. ci. *Diagram 4: (f)low visibility*, Installation, (Video Still)

referenced in the on-screen image.³⁸² I propose that potentially the elsewhere of the scene imaged on-screen could be the process of imaging the feminine negative.

The digital medium also became part of the image, as the apparatus imaged itself in its failure to stabilise the proper image. The live-feeds often switched off, causing the projector to revert to the stand-by mode's blue-screen. The participants often videoed the cameras on the props, resulting in images of lenses within lenses on the screen. The participants often videoed the screen, producing images, like those of two mirrors opposite each other, in which the image became a screen within a screen within a screen, infinitely replicating the image within itself. The clean rendition of images was perpetually interrupted, refiguring different aspects of *(f)low visibility*'s on-screen images in a fragmented disorientating way to the audience. The on-screen images emerged as a process of participants driving the cyborg imaging video apparatus through the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision in their navigation of a monstrous virtual image of maternal-feminine interiority as a process of exploration of the

³⁸² Irigaray, L. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 138.

ineffable. I propose that through this embodied process of participant interaction the audience received the image as the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision through the cyborg image as a process of reception.

I claim that the process of fragmentation in the installation occurred in the interval (feminine negative) which I posit as the site of the on-screen image. This site was undone, ruptured between the pre-symbolic (props) and the symbolic (usual approach to the screen as a symbolic site). I think that *(f)low visibility* referenced the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision because the props referenced the ineffable of the maternal-feminine. Moreover, it referenced what cannot be represented in phalloculocentrism (*objet petit a*). The props referenced the *pre-symbolic*, they referenced the horror of looking into the unknown, the unknowable, her sex. The feminine negative is only able to reference and cannot be, however I think that participants activated a disruption onto the screen (images). This process of disruption resulted in composing the screen as a kind of elsewhere of the scaffolding-area – effectively referencing the feminine negative. I propose that this process of fragmentation ruptured the screen as a site of normative symbolicity. The images of the pre-symbolic props were further fragmented and distorted through the on-screen images' disrupted references to the maternal-feminine. I propose that the screen in *(f)low visibility* does not represent, but rather references and is suspended between, the pre-symbolic (semiotic) and the symbolic due to its processual fragmentation. The screen remains between the *pre-symbolic* and the *symbolic*, caught between interiority and exteriority in the feminine negative, in the gap of the unrepresentable, in its reference to the maternal-feminine. The on-screen images were locatable, embodied unstable ineffable cyborg images of maternal-feminine interiority which were difficult for the audience to read and interpret. Yet, these were images that were composed through an embodied process of participation with the on-screen images through the scaffolding-area, as images that aggregated and gestured the feminine, *spatially* and *perceptually* in the reception of *(f)low visibility's* processes of interaction, imaging and reception.

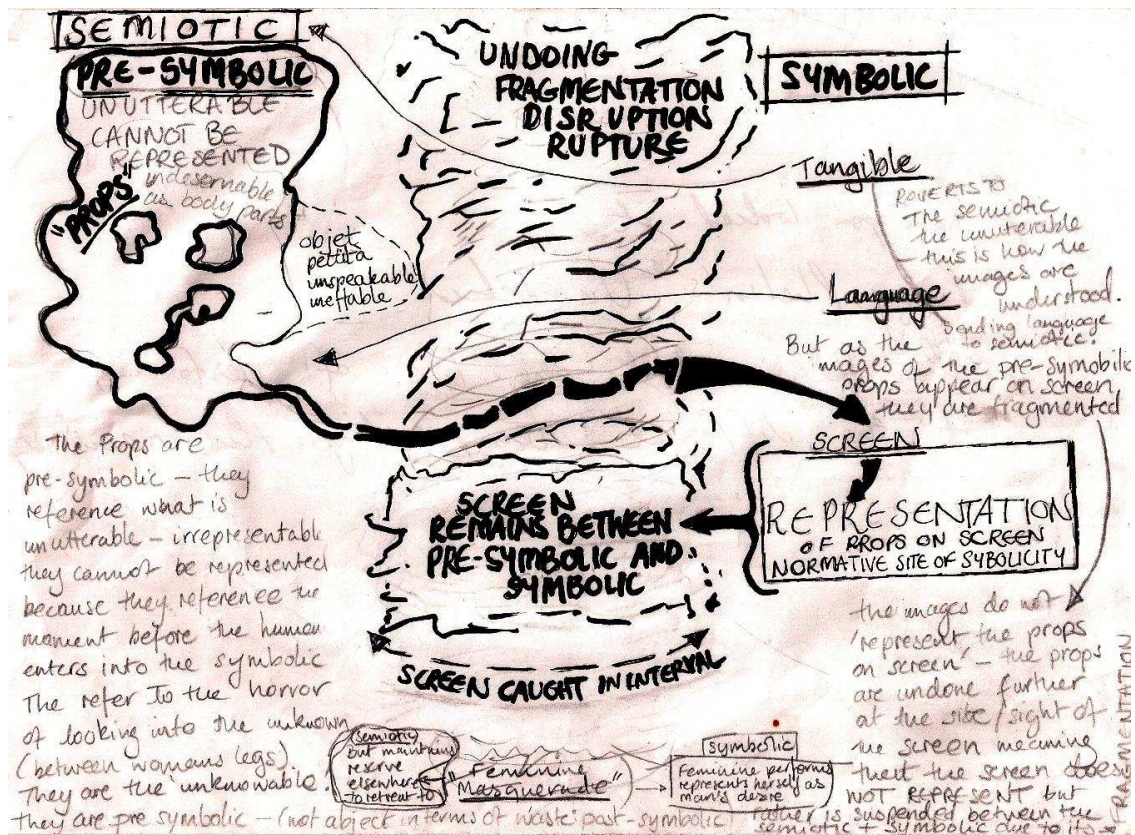


Fig. cii. Diagram 4: (f)low visibility

Conclusion

My conclusion reflects on the research process undertaken in this thesis by giving an account of its three parts and discussing each section's development of my proposition for the emergence of a feminised process of spatiality in participant interaction and audience reception of *(f)low visibility*. This proceeds with a proposal for extending my practice based research's enquiry through an exploration of participant interaction with a video apparatus and a woman in an interactive performance artwork, *Ocular Oracle*. To demonstrate how the research might be further contextualised within the field of feminist video arts practitioners, this conclusion also proposes how the thesis' proposition for a feminised process of spatiality might arise in Rist's artwork.

In the preceding sections this practice-led research thesis: *Beyond the Mirror: towards a feminised (cartographic) process of spatiality in moving-image and installation based art* has explored a feminist critique of male dominated forms of looking and interpreting the representation of the feminine. This thesis has also developed an alternative form of feminised perception and spatiality which accounts for sexuate difference in the processes of making moving images. The central question that has led my investigation is, how might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phalloculocentric reading of an artwork?

I chose to problematise relations of looking through an installation in a nightclub, *(f)low visibility*, comprising a screen, an audience, participants and props. In this thesis, I structure my inquiry into processes of looking through the development of different possible plans and diagrams for the installation in the nightclub. As my thesis progresses I propose different diagrams to offer and develop an alternative, tactile approach to encountering representations of the feminine. Meanwhile, I progressively intertwine a number of theoretical perspectives critiquing Freud's and Lacan's structuration of phalloculocentrism through Irigaray's and Haraway's propositions for embodiment. I also develop the diagrams in my thesis

through the discussion of another artwork I made, the video titled *A Room of One's Own*, as well as artworks by other artists such as Rosler, Bourgeois and Hatoum. The aim here was to tackle the question of how to de-center the audience's look from the camera lens to deform a phallogocentric reading in the reception of representations of the feminine in artworks.

My first proposal for a plan, set out in *Part 1* of the thesis, is *Diagram 1*; it suggests an enclosed room containing props for participant interaction which would be recorded by a camera and relayed live to a screen outside the room for audience reception. The setting of *Diagram 1* problematises the relation between the voyeur (the proper site of the male gaze), and the exhibitionist (the female site to be looked at) through the theories of castration anxiety, narcissism and fetishism. *Diagram 1* explores the process of how the exhibitionist (the participant in the enclosed room) might subvert the voyeur's look (the audience) through a process of performing for the audience. Here I am working against the image of the feminine as a construction of male desire in narcissism as theorised by Freud. I attempt to find a way in which to disrupt the (male) gaze from fixing the image of the feminine as a site which is looked at rather than as a site which looks. I discuss the theory of haptics to begin to open-up the relation between looking and touching. Referring to a feminist critique of Freud, I work against a patriarchal position in which the feminine has no proper subjectivity or desire to act from – in which she is always the negative side of the positive subject, man. In my plans and diagrams for *(f)low visibility* I propose to tackle this problem of the negative in Freud's theorising by employing fragmentation of an image of the feminine as a method that might deform and de-center the gaze's fixity. This method of fragmentation also aims to find a way to actively reference the feminine negative as an outcome of the process of deformation itself. *Diagram 1* specifically explores a way to work against a fetishisation of her body (in which the body is fragmented into objects in order to cope with male castration anxiety) by proposing that participants would themselves perform for the camera and the audience. However, I came to the conclusion that the fixity of the camera and the isolation of the participant in the enclosed room would not prevent the voyeur's gaze from unifying and capturing the image of the exhibitionist.

In *Part 1* I go on to propose a possible solution to the problem of *Diagram 1* by suggesting it represents feminine interiority (the enclosed room) and exteriority (the on-screen image). These are analogous with the double subjective tendencies of the feminine masquerade as theorised by Irigaray. To further tackle the problem of the visibilities and invisibilities of the video apparatus, I discuss processes of surveillance apparatus and image capture in the public. I particularly question issues of consent to being captured as an image by surveillance apparatus, which are important with regard to the analogous notion of the feminine as a captured image that is absent of her own desire. Targeting this problem, the first attempt at de-centering the audience's gaze from the camera's lens to subvert the representation of the feminine as his image of desire in this thesis was carried out through my video artwork *A Room of One's Own*. This process was also discussed through Rosler's video artwork *Semiotics of the Kitchen*. *A Room of One's Own* initially proposes to split perspectives as a means to deform the (phalloculocentric) gaze of the audience. However, I concluded that the fragmentation of the image of the feminine which occurred in the making of the video artwork at the stage set was lost. This was because the different perspectives produced in the scene were unified by the gaze of the camera person in the final video. This construction was problematic because the audience was distanced from the process of making the image of the feminine from multiple perspectives.

In my next proposal to disrupt the relation between the voyeur and the exhibitionist, *Diagram 2* in *Part 2*, I suggested a process of inter-relationality between the contents of the installation to open up the enclosed room for participant interaction. This was so that the participants, the audience, the screen, the camera and the props would be equally visible to all involved. Employing a feminist framework of inter-relationality, as developed by Irigaray and further expanded through Robinson's Irigarayan analysis of artworks, *Diagram 2* proposes to arrange and connect the contents of the installation which allows for the possibility of inter-relations between them. In *Part 2* I further explore the deconstruction of the representation of the feminine through the notion of the monstrous feminine, which subverts the construction of normal woman as theorised by Freud. I develop the question

of the inter-relationality of both the installation's contents and of the monstrous feminine through an analysis of Bourgeois' artwork, *Cells (eyes and mirrors)*, which I interpret through the myth of *Perseus and the Medusa*. Drawing on this analysis, *Part 2* develops the props for the installation in the nightclub as fragmented, monstrous representations of feminine interiority for participant interaction so as to compose the installation from a gyneacentric perspective. Even though *Diagram 2* already affords a significant degree of inter-relationality, the feminised process of inter-relationality is still passively constituted because of the situation of the camera, which remains fixed. *Diagram 2* therefore risks maintaining the camera as an overseer of the scene, maintaining the power of the look and centering the look of the audience. Addressing this problem I developed *Diagram X*, which proposes to level the camera with the contents of the installation by affixing it to a fetus-like prop in order to potentially see from a gyneacentric perspective within the installation. I further explore the relation of the look, video apparatus and participation in a discussion of contemporary interactive video arts practices. *Part 2* concludes with an analysis of Hatoum's video artwork *Measures of Distance* which further explores the thesis' practice based methodology by proposing a feminised cartographic process of spatiality.

The following development of the plan for the installation of *(f)low visibility* at the nightclub, *Diagram 3* in *Part 3*, takes up the problem of the fixity of the camera problematised in *Diagram 2* and *Diagram X*. *Diagram 3* then develops, through Haraway's theorising of partiality, the proposal for multiple partially locatable perspectives as a more productive alternative that could create an active feminised process of imaging. *Diagram 3* proposes multiple cameras to be worn by a number of participants and corresponding live-feeds to be projected onto a screen in order to disrupt the audience's look, preventing it from unifying with the camera's/audience's gaze. Crucially, the introduction of prosthetic cameras, worn by participants in *Diagram 3*, proposed to enable a potential embodiment of the apparatus' image production. This was to register the image through a process of touching in addition to looking as a possible way to activate a feminised process of spatiality. The thesis takes into account feminist cinematic theory's analysis

of the inherently phallogocentric relation of the spectator to the image in cinematic experience and apparatus theory.

In the concluding section of the thesis, *Diagram 4* documents the installation of *(f)low visibility* in the nightclub. Further developing the insights of *Diagram 3*, the installation of *(f)low visibility* (documented in *Diagram 4*) comprised the audience, the participants and the props in a scaffolding-area, prosthetic cameras for participants and props, and a screen displaying live-feeds from the cameras. In this final set-up the look of the participants was de-centered through their simultaneous navigation of the scaffolding-area and the on-screen image produced by their own prosthetic camera. I propose that they navigated the virtual space of the screen at the same time as navigating the actual space of the scaffolding-area, as a double process of tactile looking.

Meanwhile, the audience's look was disrupted and de-centered as it shifted between the four on-screen images (produced by the participants' and the props' cameras' live-feeds) and the unfolding interaction in the scaffolding-area. As proposed in *A Room of One's Own*, the disruption of the audience's gaze could be effected only if the process of making the image of the feminine from multiple perspectives was available to audience reception. Taking this problem into account, the installation of *(f)low visibility* is composed in such a way that the audience can potentially become a participant at any time, whereby the effect of de-centering (through the process of making images) is available to the audience. Through my observations of the installation I reflect on the audience's look as a look that shifted between two sites which did not seem to resemble each other (the scaffolding-area and the site of the screen). I propose this fragmented their reception of the installation's references to the feminine. The participants' orientated and navigated the on-screen image by moving their prosthetic over the surface of the monstrous props. I propose this further disrupted the site of the representation of maternal-feminine interiority in the scaffolding-area as images on-screen moved in and out of focus and disintegrated. I claim that the image on-screen was produced and received as a possible fantasy of exploring maternal-feminine interiority, which figured as an attempt to reference the unrepresentable—feminine negative—on-screen from a

gyneacentric perspective. I claim that, through this process, *(f)low visibility* activated the on-screen image of the *feminine negative* in participants' and audience's reception. My thesis claims that a feminised process of spatiality was developed through these different forms of hysterical deformations in the production and reception of the on-screen image. I claim that this de-centered the audience's (male) gaze and deformed their phallogulocentric reading of an image of the feminine. The participants drove the on-screen image with their embodied prosthetic camera. The participants encountered the image of the maternal-feminine through their detection of the props in the scaffolding-area and on-screen. Intertwining Irigaray's and Haraway's theories on embodiment, I propose that this resulted in their navigation of the fantasy of *intrauterine touching/vision* through a process of *cyborg imaging*.

Proposal for future research



Fig. ciii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

My thesis' proposition for a process of feminised spatiality is further explored here to show how my development of this method might be applied to and extended through future practice-led research projects beyond my investigation in this thesis. I conclude my exploration of this proposition for



Fig. civ. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

an extension of my research through an interactive performance artwork I made, *Ocular Oracle*, documented on video (see *Appendix 1*).

Ocular Oracle proposes to extend this thesis' proposed method of feminised spatiality from a gyneacentric perspective by further reflecting on the potential for inter-relational exchanges between the participants/audience within the video apparatus.³⁸³ The interactive performance also investigates how fragmentation of the image of the feminine might come about through reducing the distances between the apparatus and the participants/audience through the register of touch. This artwork offers an extended process of inquiry for the thesis' central research question: how might a feminised form of spatiality, based on a gyneacentric model, deform an audience's phalloculocentric reading of an artwork?

Ocular Oracle is an interactive performance with moving images shaped by the encounter between the performer and participants. The two participants (a man and a woman) each interacted with me in the performance individually. They did not encounter or observe each other's

³⁸³ The analysis carried out here in the conclusion, of the interactive performance documented on video (see: *Appendix 1*), focusses on particular moments of interaction which foreground my thesis' proposition for a feminised process of spatiality. The other instances which arise in the performance which have not been elaborated on might provide further material for analysis in terms of de-centering the gaze of participants. However there is not enough scope to provide a broader analysis of all the aspects of interaction here in the conclusion.

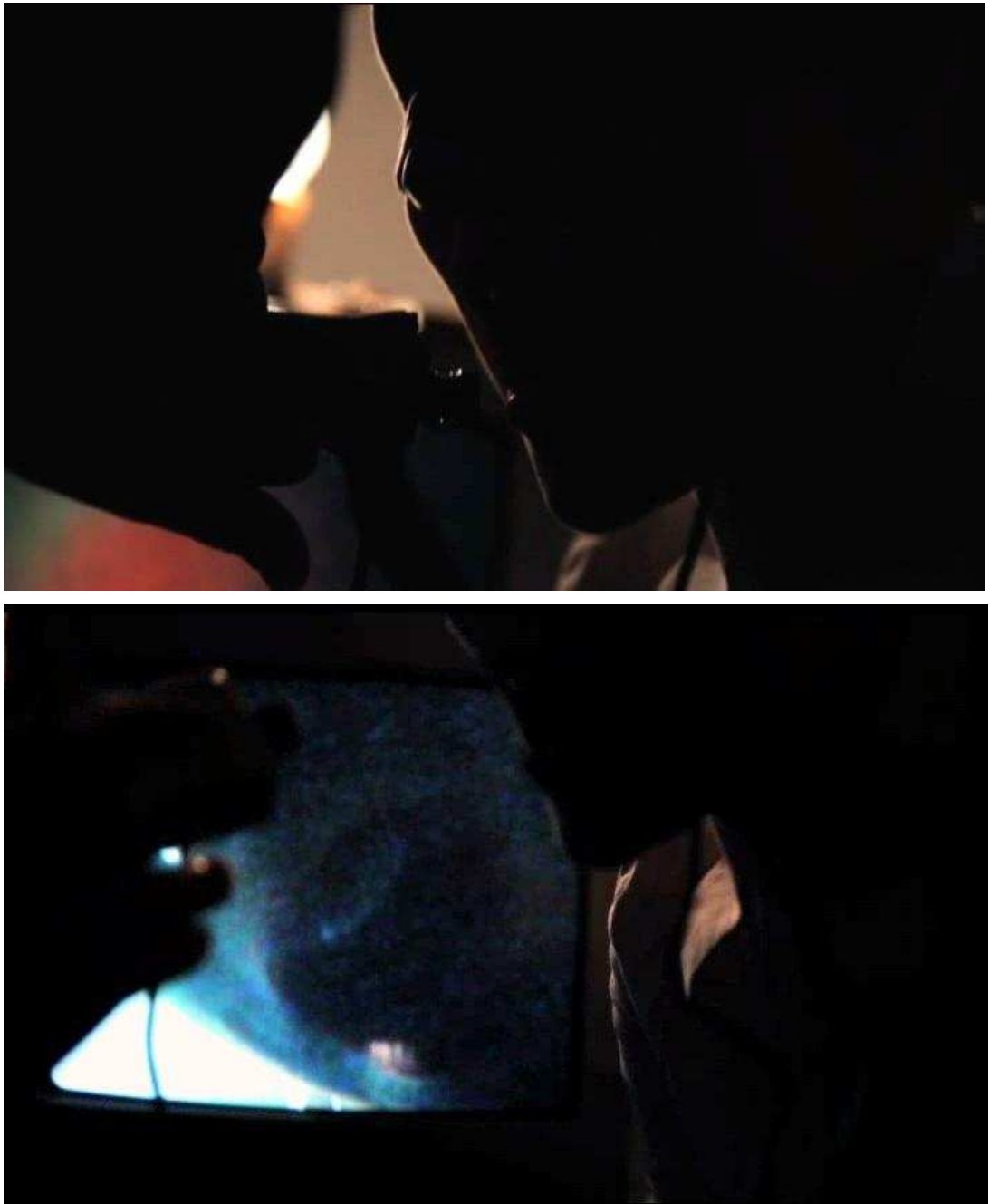


Fig. cv. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

participation. Therefore, each participant was also an audience during his or her own interaction. The performance was recorded by a camera person in order to produce a DVD documentation of the live performance (in *Appendix 1*). The performer and each participant had their own camera. There were three television monitors in the installation; two large ones which participants interacted with and a small monitor which they did not interact with. I discuss the exchanges between the participants' and the two large monitors.



Fig. cvi. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

I sat on a chair, blindfolded myself and fastened a miniature camera on the centre of my forehead. Each participant came into the room and sat in front of me on a chair. The live-feed from the camera on my forehead captured the participant's face when they sat opposite me.³⁸⁴ Their face was imaged on a large television monitor to my left (and on a small monitor to my right). I opened my hand and asked the participant to put their hand in mine in order to drive interaction in the register of touch. I then dressed their hand with a miniature camera. Its live-feed was displayed on a monitor to my right (next to the small monitor displaying their face).

Ocular Oracle's set-up is significantly different to the proposed set-up of *(f)low visibility*. There were no monstrous props per se in *Ocular Oracle*. There were only the participants with their (embodied) prosthetic cameras, the television monitors and the camera person. This was composed to explore how a cyborg process of imaging might drive the inter-relational exchanges between me and the participants in a gyneacentric register.

In a way in *Ocular Oracle*, I positioned myself as a prop/image for participant interaction; I wore the blindfold to perform blindness, analogously performing woman's body as the site of castration (although I could partially

³⁸⁴ (Refer to the video documentation of *Ocular Oracle* in Appendix 1).



Fig. cvii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

see through the blindfold, it appeared that I could not). I was surrounded by screens, setting myself up (as a woman) to be imaged by participants with their prosthetic cameras, whilst only being able to partially navigate and compose images with the participants. Seemingly, on first glance, I had positioned myself in *Ocular Oracle* as a feminine image par excellence. This led me to ask myself a question: As a woman, why would I construct myself as a potentially blank space of desire? I decided to represent myself as the feminine negative in order to analyse how participants and I could subvert this representation through the video apparatus. In an attempt to subvert a phallogocentric reading of a representation of the feminine, *Ocular Oracle* is composed through proximity of the exchange (elsewhere³⁸⁵) between the participants and the video apparatus.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ 'if I am a woman—that I am perhaps to some degree “elsewhere”' Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 121.

³⁸⁶ The images might be composed differently through a process of inter-relational exchanges between two; considering Irigaray's concept of two that encounter each other and cultivate a shared/intimacy with each other whilst maintaining their sexually different positions respectively. Irigaray, L. *Sharing the World*. London: Continuum, (2008). This process of exchange (between two) in *Ocular Oracle* attempts to subvert the construction of her image from unifying from one singular perspective. As a result of the inter-relational exchange between the performer and the participant the image of the feminine might be composed as a process of feminine (self-touching) without the (male) gaze taking possession of her image. The performer and the participant might build images of the feminine together through the proximity of their encounter, an encounter between two, without appropriating her image. In Irigaray's words, 'and even the motifs of “self-touching,” of “proximity,” isolated as such or reduced to utterances could effectively pass for an attempt to appropriate the feminine to



Fig. cviii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

The first participant sat opposite me. I asked her to put her hand in mine, I dressed her hand with the prosthetic camera and then asked her what she could see. She pointed her prosthetic camera at my face and said she could see me. Whilst observing the monitor screen she moved closer towards my face with her camera. She asked me to open my mouth. Instead of getting closer to my exterior image, she moved the camera towards the inside of my mouth; my interior. The orientation of her camera towards my mouth could represent the phallus penetrating my body. However, the on-screen image (the large monitor to my left) began to degrade as she got closer (because less light was available to the camera). Black, grey, and green pixels fuzzed in the on-screen image as the video apparatus struggled to sustain a legible image. Though the image of the inside of my mouth became less visible on-screen, the participant continued to explore it. As she probed inside my mouth, the monitor's image seemed to represent the *dark continent*. It was as if she was trying to image the ineffable. My mouth became a kind of vagina dentata—a castrating force—as a black hole with teeth was imaged on-screen. I think that this process of interaction actively

discourse [...] Given the way the “self-touching” of female “self-affection” comes into play as a rebounding from one to the other without any possibility of interruption, and given that in this interplay, proximity confounds any adequation, any appropriation.’ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 79.



Fig. cvix. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

transformed the on-screen image of the feminine. As I collaborated with the participant, who seemed to be driven by the desire to reference the interior body, the apparatus failed to represent a continuously visible image of the feminine. What this generated was a fragmented monstrous image of her that potentially subverted a phalloculocentric reading of her image.

After the woman left the room, the next participant (a man) entered and sat opposite me. This participant began by exploring the video apparatus. We discussed where I could move to. He orientated me so that my prosthetic camera would capture the camera person who was documenting *Ocular Oracle*.³⁸⁷ The camera person's image was displayed on the monitor to my right. The participant videoed the monitor with his prosthetic camera, the monitor on the left displayed the camera person – acknowledging their presence and their camera in the scene. Through this exchange all three of us were imaged in the scene on-screen without any camera's perspective dominating the centre of the look, potentially de-centring the (male) gaze.

In another instance the participant pointed his camera at the monitor's screen that his prosthetic was connected to. The monitor struggled to image itself, in effect to mirror itself – this process created feed-back loops on-screen. I could see the flashes of colour moving across the on-screen image

³⁸⁷ (refer to the DVD documentation of the interactive performance *Ocular Oracle* in Appendix 1).

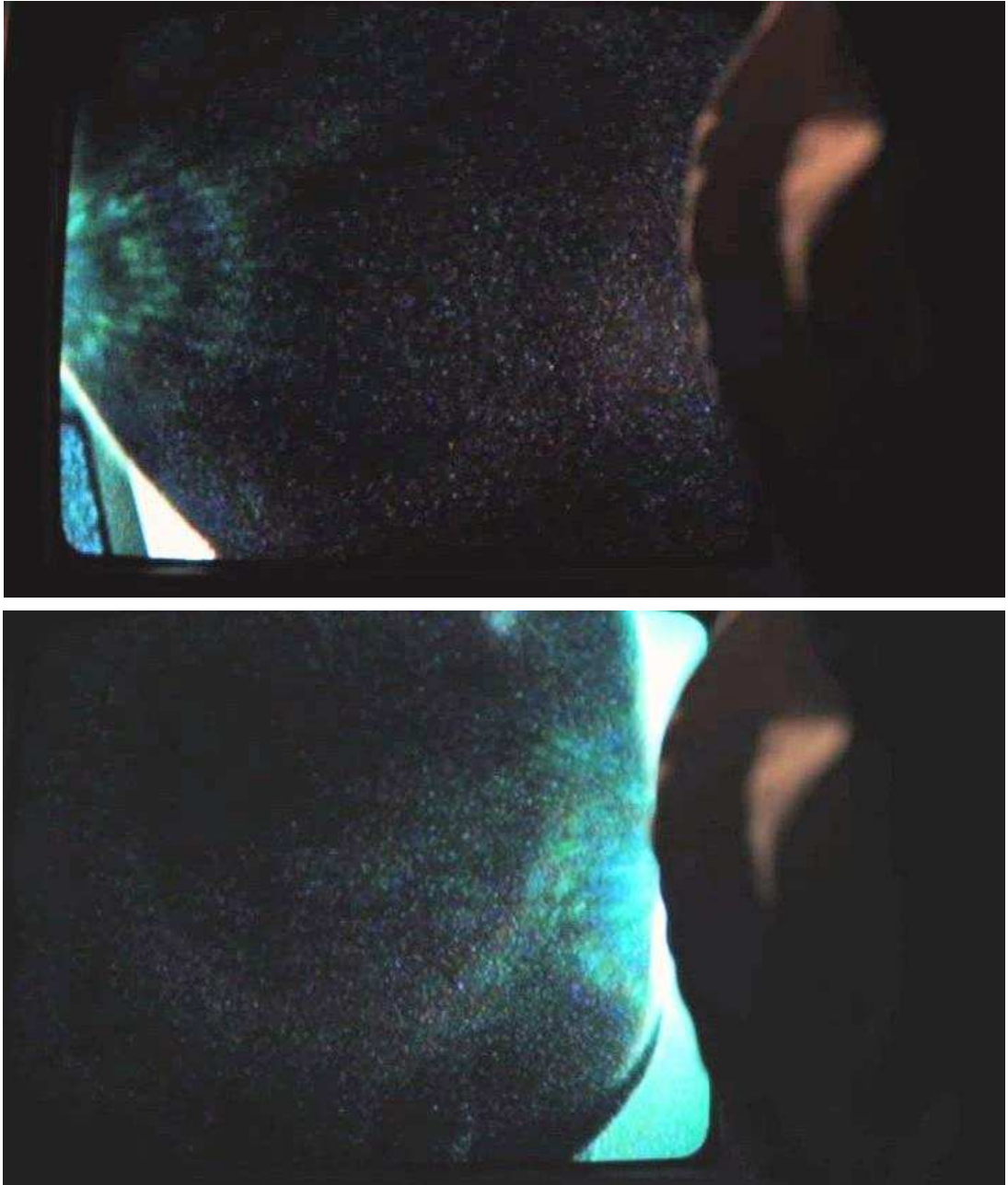


Fig. cx. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

through my blindfold, so I touched the screen with my hand. The participant asked me if he could video my hand. The image of my hand touching the screen was replicated in the on-screen image, as though there was a hand over another hand, touching a screen within a screen (and so on). The image of my hand was enlarged in each on-screen replication, amplifying its size the further it distanced itself from its first replica. Replicating the mirror image of my hand, in reverse size order to that of an actual infinity mirror on-screen, deformed the order of perspectival viewing. The larger the images of my



Fig. cxi. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

hands, the more pixilated they became, throwing touching into relief in the image as the preferred register of interaction (over a geometrical process of viewing). This relation potentially deformed a phallogulocentric reading of the performer's image. Fragmented images were produced because visibility/legibility of the image was not at the forefront of this interaction. I propose that the participant and I inter-related through a process of touching. This drove the orientation of the images' production, capture and rendition in a feminised register; effectively touching each other through our embodied exchanges in the video apparatus. My hand touched the on-screen image of itself, specifically the back of the palm – my actual hand was enfolded between the hand of the participant pointing their prosthetic camera at mine and the virtual hands represented in the on-screen image. In this way I think that touching was activated through a partial embodiment of the prosthesis (between the body and the machine). This occurred through a process of immersion within the apparatus which potentially composed a feminised form of spatiality and perception.³⁸⁸

I asked the participant to help me to lean my face against the screen, he held my head and guided me to the monitor (to my left), which his

³⁸⁸ In Irigaray's words, 'the sensible which is the feminine touches the sensible from which he or she emerges' Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London: Continuum, (2004), p. 139.



Fig. cxii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

prosthetic camera's live-feed was connected. I lent the left hand side of my face against the television screen and he videoed the right hand side of my face in front of the monitor. The image of my face appeared as a fragmented reflection, as though I was lent against a mirror. However, if the screen were an actual mirror it would reflect the side of my face which was against it (the right hand side). The left hand side of my face was imaged on-screen because this was the side that was captured by the participant's prosthetic camera. As my face was repeated across the screen it was fragmented,



Fig. cxiii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

enlarged and more pixelated with each repetition (in the same way as my hand was enlarged in this relation as previously discussed).

I began to speak to the participant. As I spoke the replicated images on-screen could not keep up with my speech in real time. There was a time lag between each replication of my image on the monitor; I appeared as though I was speaking in slow motion. The fragmented images of my face appeared on-screen as a process of miming (the feminine masquerade). I think that this fetishised image was subverted by my slurred speech because

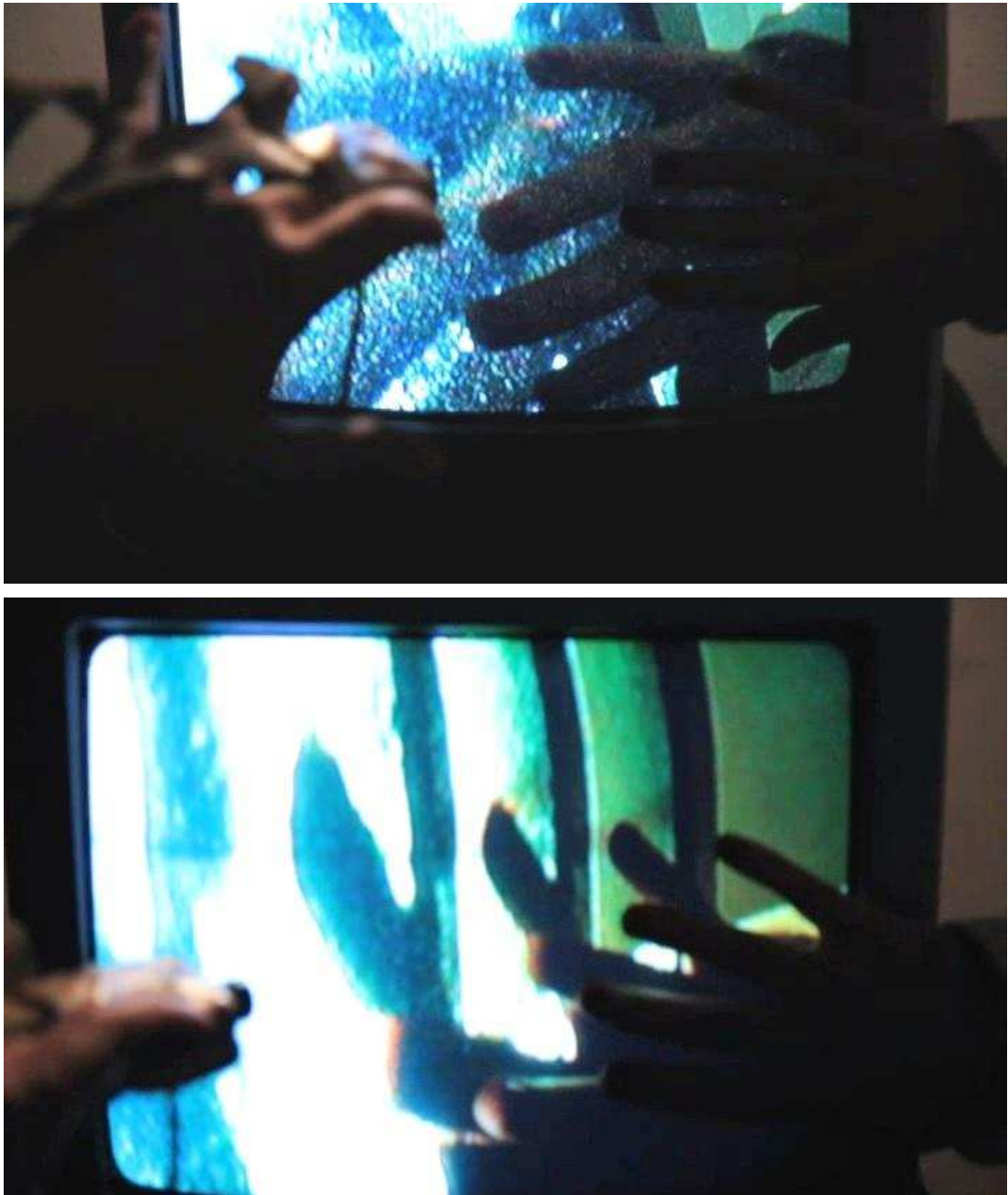


Fig. cxiv. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

this action performed a hysterical attempt at deforming the phallogulocentric production of my image. In Irigaray's theorising of hysteria she explains that 'hysteria is silent and at the same time it mimes. And—how could it otherwise—miming/reproducing a language that is not its own, masculine language, it caricatures and deforms that language'.³⁸⁹

With his other hand the participant took up another prosthetic device, his mobile phone. Equipped with two prosthetic cameras and two screens he

³⁸⁹ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell University Press, (1985), p. 137.

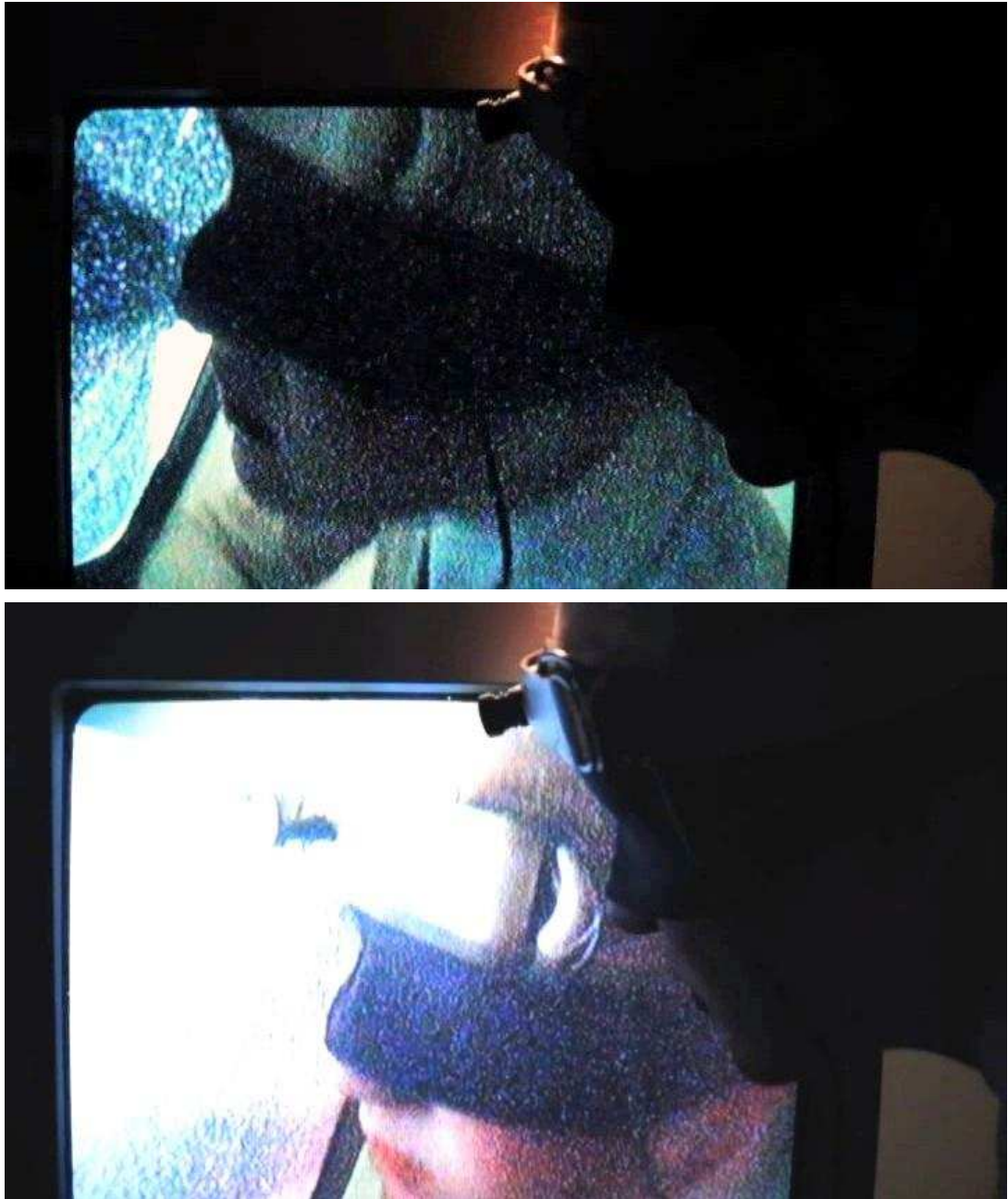


Fig. cxv. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

held the phone camera in front of my face as my face continued to lean against the monitor screen. Enfolding my (actual) face between the television screen (which his prosthetic camera's live-feed was connected to) and his phone's screen, he then pointed his prosthetic camera at the screen on his phone, which was capturing my face lent against the monitor's screen. My face was fragmented further on both screens. The feed-back loop became more acute in the television monitor's imaging, rendering flashes of orange, blue, white and black through the repetitions of my face on both screens,

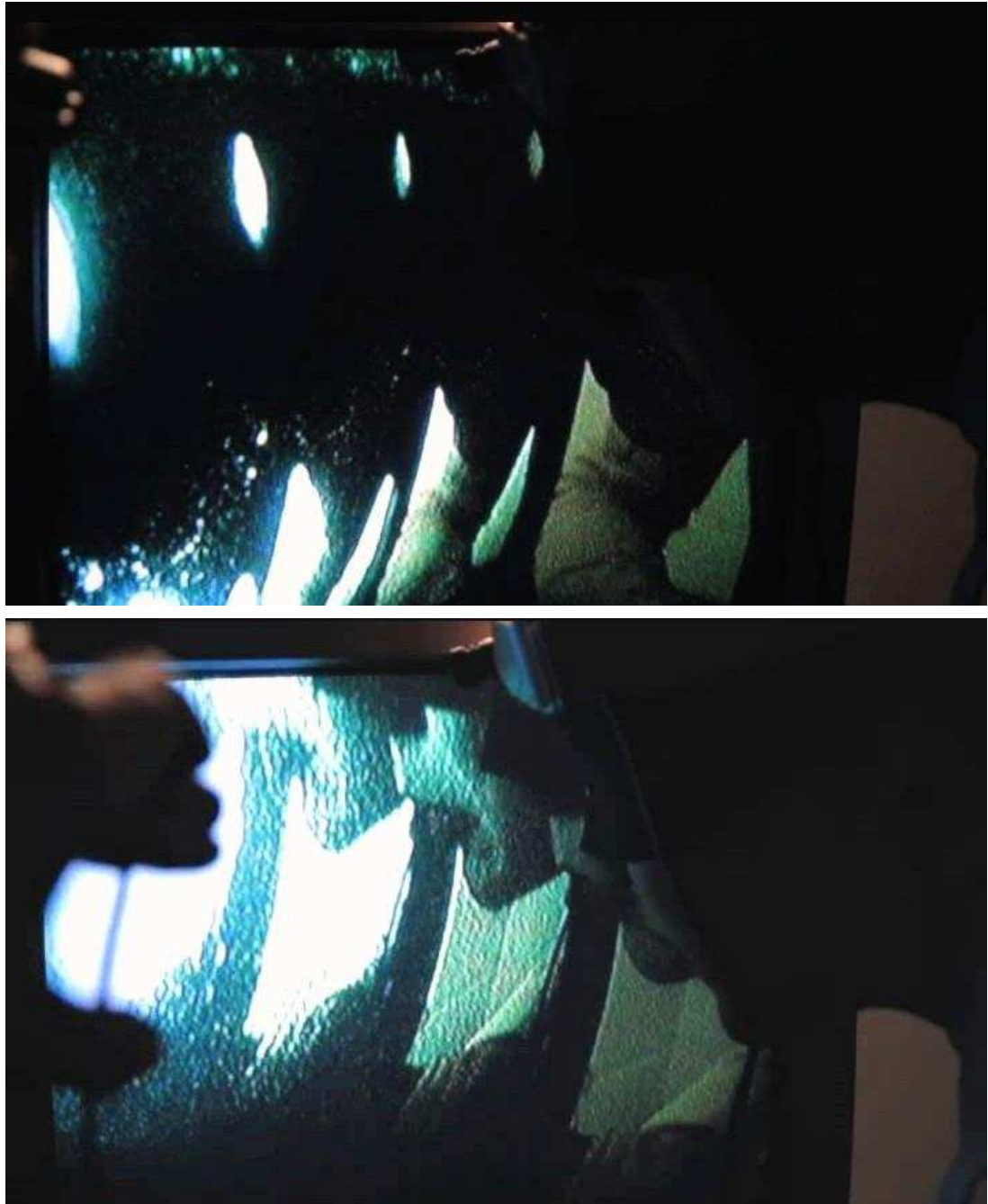


Fig. cxvi. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

dissolving the representations of my image between the two screens. Though my image was fragmented in this process, this might not be considered to be an active feminised process of fragmentation due to the image's incoherence. However, this could be considered in terms of contemporary approaches to cinematic experience, elaborated by Francesco Casetti in his analysis of *Artaud Double Bill*, directed by Atom Egoyan;

a film which in three minutes creates a neat construction of interlinking elements. There are two present spectators, Anna and Nicole, who are sitting in



Fig. cxvii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

two separate cinemas but who participate in each other's filmgoing experience. They watch two films, *Vivre sa vie* and *The Adjuster*, which belong to two different phases of cinema history but which both make reference to what is happening in front of a screen. [...] We see a mobile phone which extends the cinematic screen by capturing and transmitting it.³⁹⁰

Casetti's theorising foregrounds the context of the spectator's process of monitoring of a scene. Casetti says that in contemporary cinematic experiences the scene is likely to be mediated by our own devices, proposing that the audience is likely to make their own film/video, that is, to alter the centralised perspective of the camera. Perhaps this is the moment of transition in the participants' inter-relational exchange in *Ocular Oracle* that acknowledges that we are already pre-disposed to prosthetic cyborg processes of imaging.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Screen 52:1 Spring 2011, Oxford University Press. Back to the Motherland: the film theatre in the postmedia age Francesco Casetti, pp.1-2.

³⁹¹ Watching a film increasingly involves intervention by the spectators, who find themselves literally having to direct what they have in front of them, the environment in which they move, even their very selves. Spectators intervene, for example, by choosing the instrument on which to watch the film: this can be a traditional apparatus – film, projector, screen – but it can also be a DVD player, MP3 player or computer. Also spectators modulate the times and places of viewing: a movie may be watched in its entirety, but also in fragments; we may delay its conclusion, or choose the main scenes. Above all, interventions can redefine film [... it is] something to be manipulated or exchanged through file sharing programmes. [...] These are all elements that testify to how much the framework has changed. If traditional spectators once modelled themselves on films, spectators now model films, or remodel them onto themselves, thanks to a combination of precise practices which invest the object, the modalities and the conditions of vision. The effect is that the spectators become the active

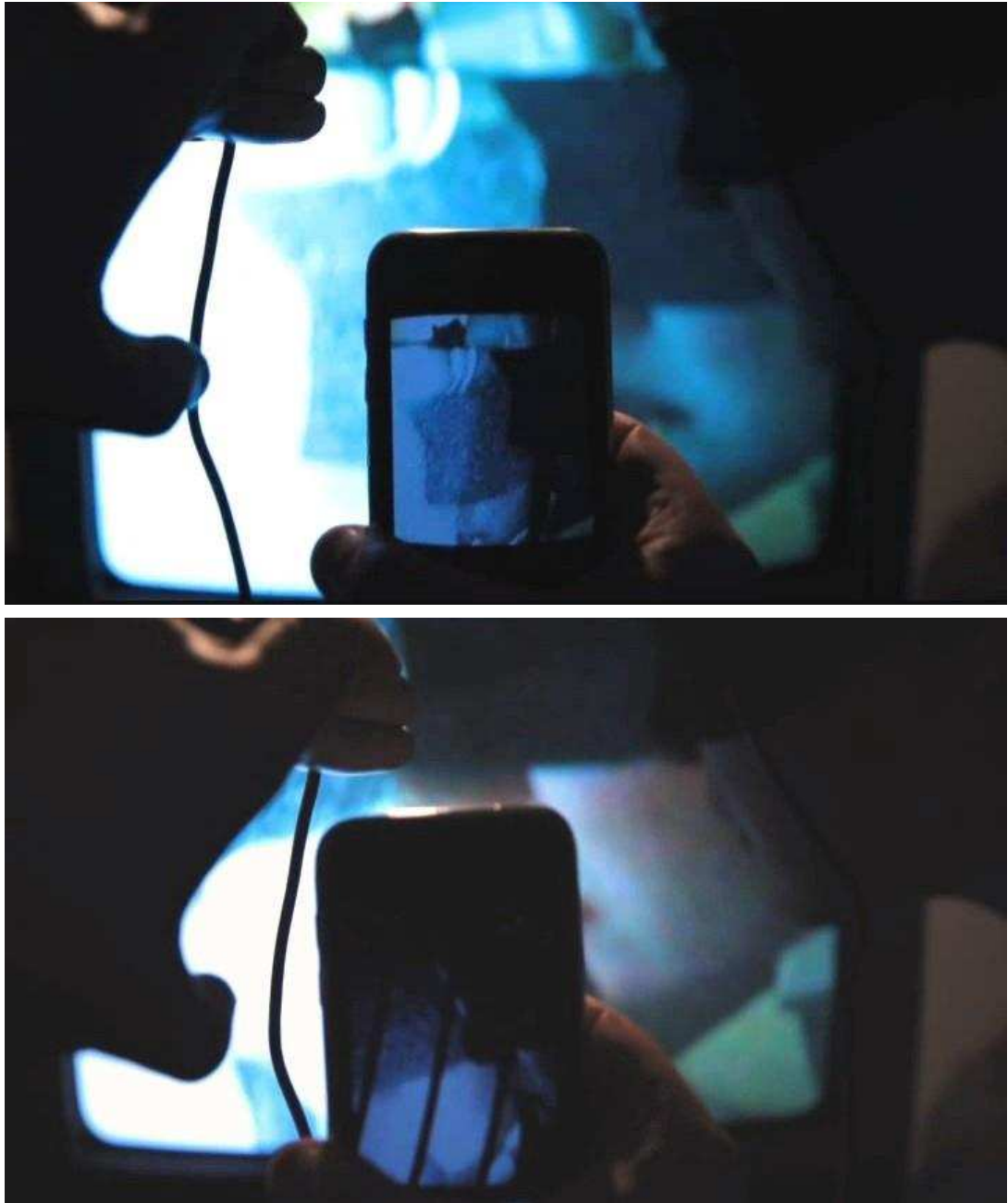


Fig. cxviii. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

Moreover, Casetti argues that a 'centralized gaze switches to a decentralized glance'³⁹² because of fractured spectatorial processes that occur through the apparatus. However, my thesis is not constructed through the fleeting or fixing properties of the gaze as both (gazing and/or glancing) are situated at the top of the hierarchy of the senses. I propose that *Ocular Oracle* de-

protagonists of the game. They are no longer asked to be present at a projection with eyes wide open; instead they act. Attendance has ceded the field of performance. Ibid. p.6.

³⁹² Ibid. p.5.

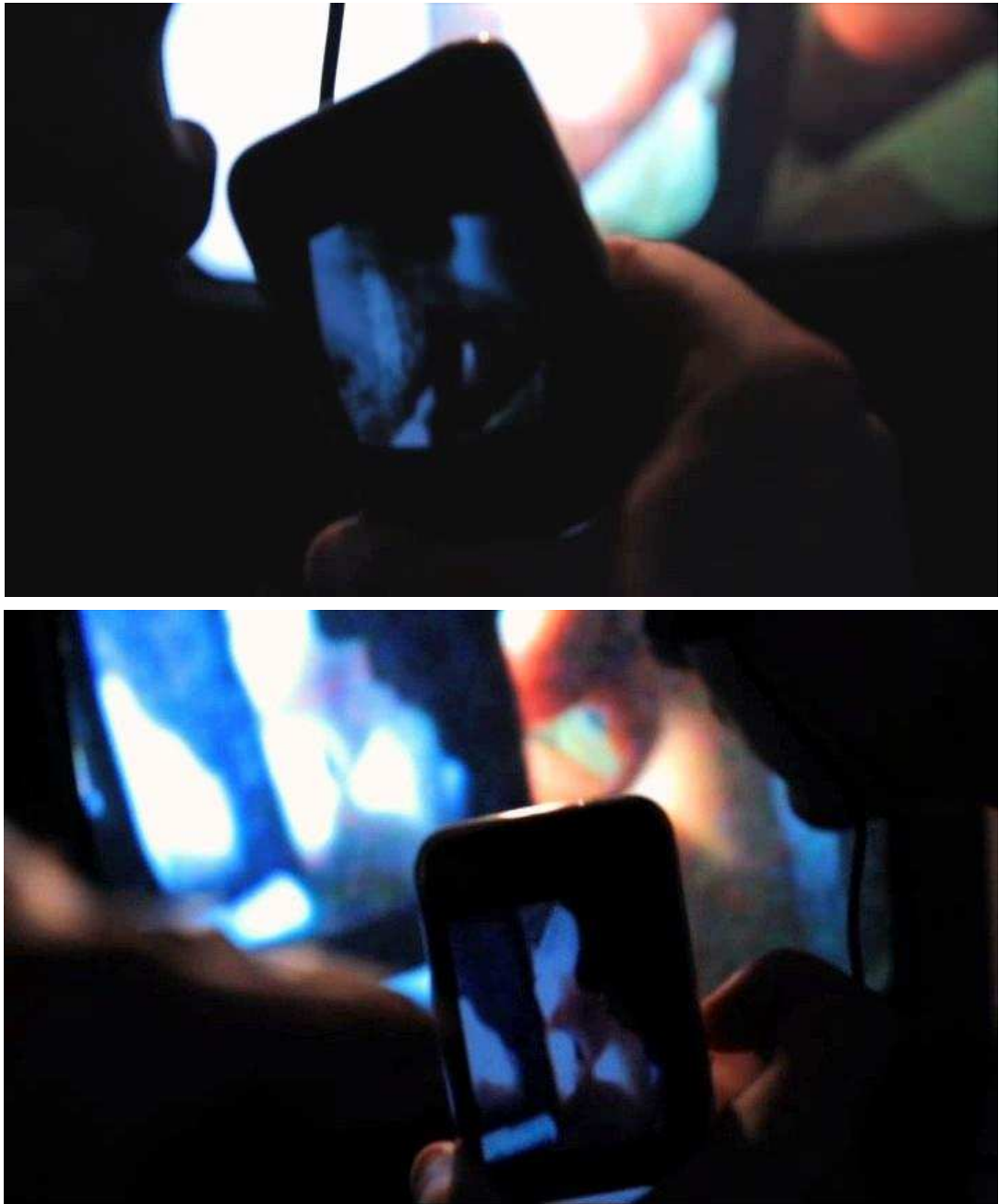


Fig. cxix. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Stills x2)

centred the gaze of participants by offering multiple partially locatable viewing perspectives. In addition to listening and speaking, participant and performer interaction may have been predicated on touch as the preferred register of perception. As a tactile process of exploring a fantasy of intrauterine space in *Ocular Oracle*, I propose that together the participants and performer actively orientated and navigated a feminised process of spatiality through their immersion in the video apparatus.



Fig. cxx. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

I think that the first participant composed active feminised images with me through a process of inter-relationship and proximity, by videoing inside my mouth and exploring the dark continent on-screen, potentially navigating a fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision. I propose that this process potentially referenced the feminine negative on-screen through a gyneacentric approach. In my interactions with the second participant, I think we also indirectly built images of the feminine by referencing her perception, space, and time. Perhaps this feminised process emerged through the navigation of her image:

- through touching/videoing each other's prosthetic cameras, deforming and fragmenting their images on-screen;
- by touching the screen with my hand;
- through the hysterical rendition of my slurred speech in the on-screen image.

As *Ocular Oracle* has shown (refer to documentation in *Appendix 1*), an image of the feminine can potentially be orientated through the tactile process of feminised spatiality which was developed through the thesis' plans and installation of *(f)low visibility*. As a possible extension to my practice-led research from a gyneacentric perspective, I think that *Ocular Oracle* potentially develops further an emergent process of feminised



Fig. cxxi. *Ocular Oracle*, Interactive Performance, (Video Still)

spatiality through its exploration of participant interaction and immersion in the video apparatus. This occurs through a process of cyborg imaging that navigates the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision.

Feminised Spatiality in Rist's Installation, *Pour Your Body Out* (7354 Cubic Meters)

My claim for activating feminised spatiality through the plans and installation of *(f)low visibility* in the thesis takes into account:

- inter-relationality of feminised content of an artwork;
- the deformation of the (male) gaze of an audience;
- the navigation of a fantasy of touching intrauterine space through participation and audience reception.

These could compose reception through a gyneacentric process of immersion in the video apparatus. Considering these as feminised processes of spatiality in an encounter with an artwork, I attempt to apply the methods developed in the thesis for the possibility of a feminised experience and feminised process of spatiality through Pipilotti Rist's installation *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)* (2008). By doing so I hope to further



Fig. cxxii. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

contextualise my practice within a contemporary field of feminist art practitioners whose work might be interpreted through a similar process of feminisation, and feminised experience of the artwork.

Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters) (2008) seems to offer an alternative experience of the *Garden of Eden* to subvert our usual experience of a representation of Eve. There are three walls imaged with one seamless projection depicting women in a landscape and a waterscape, accompanied by earth worms, a pig and two snails. At the centre of the room is a round sofa. The outer ring of the sofa represents 'the white of the egg, of the eye, and [inner circle] then the black pupil'.³⁹³ The part that represents the pupil contains the speakers, the white part is for visitors to sit on. Rather than structuring participation from the context of looking, as the eye motif of the sofa might suggest, the installation seems to be centred on an embodied process of reception. It provokes an encounter through the register of touching/listening before necessarily looking, as the centre of the installation emphasises the apparatus' tactile and acoustic composition (sofa). Rist maintains that she has 'always been interested in how the body moves in the

³⁹³ 'The music will come out of this sofa, round sofa and the speakers are inside [...] so this is the skin and this is.' Interview with Pipilotti Rist, MoMa. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxVKA83_s3g (accessed: 20/05/13).

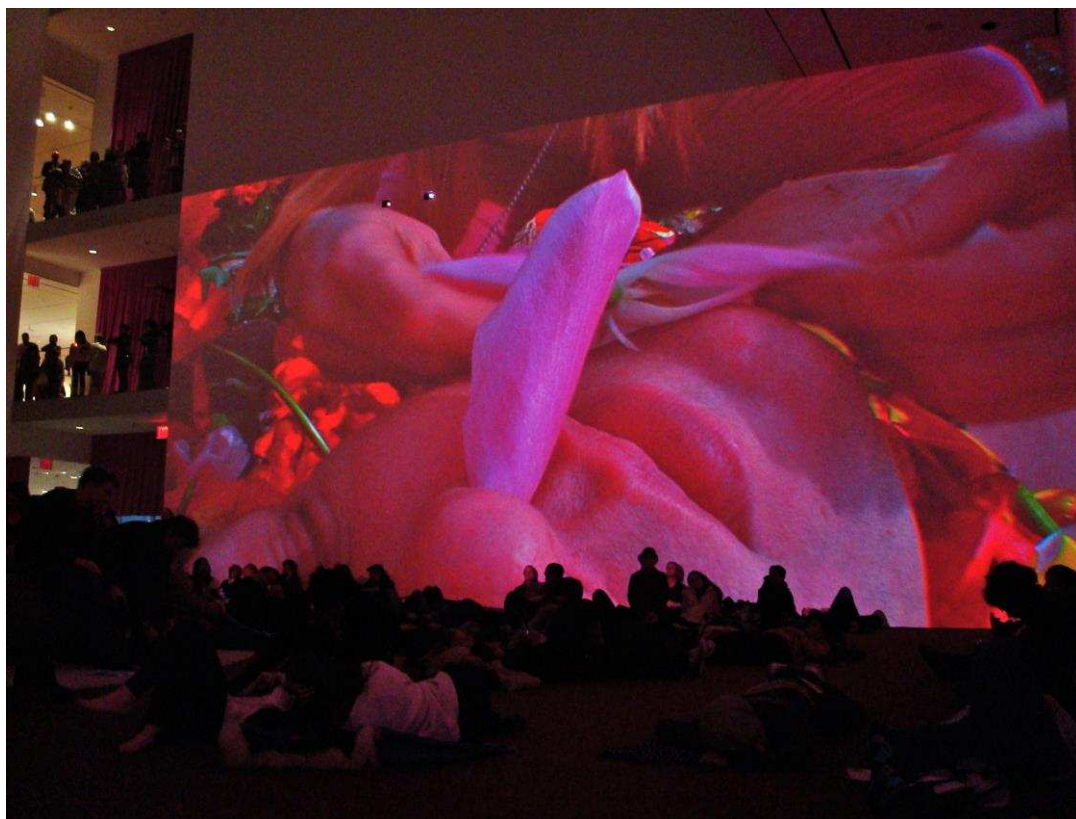


Fig. cxxiii. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

room in relation to a work of art'.³⁹⁴ The tone of encounter with the work is set in terms of participation; Rist shifts the register of reception from a process of looking to one of movement and touching as she requests participants to remove their shoes before entering the Marron Atrium at the MoMA.³⁹⁵ In the beginning of the piece, before the images are screened, there is an instruction on what might be interpreted as an invitation to experience³⁹⁶ and immerse³⁹⁷ oneself in an embodied process of interaction:

³⁹⁴ Schreuder, C. *Pour Your Body Out, Immersed in an Installation by Pipilotti Rist*. (In) *Elixir, The video organism of Pipilotti Rist*. (eds) Kempers, P. Schreuder, C. Slyce, J. & Wennekes, E. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: Rotterdam, (2009), p.179.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 177.

³⁹⁶ 'People never say they have 'seen' a Pipilotti Rist work, they always say they have 'experienced' it.' Pipilotti Rist interviewed by Patricia Bickers. *Caressing Space*. *Art Monthly*. Issue No 350. October 2011, p.3.

³⁹⁷ 'Let me first say something about 'immersive'. You are right, I try to work as immersively as possible because I think we always try to frame everything behind and within the square format and it affects us strongly. It is a kind of remedy to make the work as huge as possible – it becomes like our skin. In life you are often alone, but when you come together in imaginary rooms you become a common body.' *Ibid.* p. 2.



Fig. cxxiv. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

Please feel as liberated as possible, and move as freely as you can or want to! Watch the videos and listen to the sound in any position or movement. Practice stretching: pour your body out of your hips or watch through your legs. Rolling around and singing is also allowed!³⁹⁸

Dwarfed by the enlarged imagery (for example, the tulips imaged on-screen are 25 feet high) the participant encounters the enlarged view of the landscape, waterscape and a woman. The images' composition is frequently and deliberately deformed. They are often mirrored at the edges of the adjoining walls or at different intervals along the wall, creating kaleidoscopic imagery, reversing the image of woman, and repeating her image differently through a process of fragmentation.

The participant could be said to encounter the feminine within a womb-like setting. Whilst the tropes of femininity are played out through referencing fields of tulips, fallen apples and floating strawberries, they are subverted and embodied by the main character as she eats the flowers, pulls off the

³⁹⁸ Karen Rosenberg, 20th November 2008. New York Times. Art Review. Tiptoe by the Tulips (or Stretch by the Apples) http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/21/arts/design/21rist.html?_r=0 (accessed: 23/05/13).



Fig. cxxv. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

petals, rolls them and puts them up her nose. The images further emphasise references to her (intrauterine) interiority, and a relation to touch, through the close-ups of hands and feet, the skin, face and the body of the woman. 'The camera crawls across the skin. Her nipple is shown close-up, each freckle visible. A jet of blood streams from her nether regions. In her bloodied underwear she submerges herself in the water and it turns red'.³⁹⁹

During another instance in *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)* the viewer encounters the image from the perspective of a flower; the camera videoing the woman from beneath. As she reaches down to pluck the flower, her hand opens over the lens. This action seems to shift a potential phalloculocentric perspective in the participant's encounter with the image. Rather than positioning the camera as a phallic process of vision, it seems to become feminised as it stands in for the tulip (a symbol of the feminine rather than a phallus). By taking up the perspective of the flower it situates the participant's encounter with the image from a woman's perspective. As she opens her hand over the lens the screen images her hand enclosing around it. This seems to suggest that the camera's/participant's look is enveloped by touch, which could be proposed

³⁹⁹ Schreuder, C. *Pour Your Body Out*, Immersed in an Installation by Pipilotti Rist. (In) *Elixir*, The video organism of Pipilotti Rist. (eds) Kempers, P. Schreuder, C. Slyce, J. & Wennekes, E. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: Rotterdam, (2009), p. 178.



Fig. cxxvi. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

as a feminised form of embodied perception. The hand reaches towards the participant/audience on-screen – the screen goes black, which could acknowledge an instance of immersion in intrauterine “touching”. The participant/audience is, perhaps, momentarily suspended in darkness as she plucks the apparatus from the ground. This could be interpreted as the woman, on-screen, dislocating the participant’s/audience’s eye from the lens of the camera.⁴⁰⁰

The immersion in the intrauterine through a cyborg image might be suggested as the participant is immersed in the apparatus:

- in the sound of the internal body that reverberates through the atrium;
- by being surrounded by continuous moving projections of a woman
- and through the participants’ body’s movements in the installation.⁴⁰¹

Spaces collapse into each other without a clear perspectival view of the woman featured in the installation. The scene’s representation of her body under water seems to have no axis, she moves

⁴⁰⁰ Rist explains that this piece was intended in its composition to caress the space ‘I meant caresses also in an architectural way. I could have decided to destroy the space, or to fight against it. I decided instead to caress Taniguchi’s space [...] and it was said that I have changed the gender of MoMA. Rist interviewed by Patricia Bickers. *Caressing Space*. *Art Monthly*. Issue No 350. October 2011, p.3.

⁴⁰¹ ‘People took over the space, and even some yoga people came up with the idea themselves and used it on a couple of Sunday mornings for their sessions.’ *Ibid*.



Fig. cxxvii. *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, installation, 2008

through the water without a sense of up, down or across, perhaps leading the participant/audience to experience the image through a fantasy of immersion in the intrauterine.

In another moment in the diegesis, the camera moves across her face lying in the bed of flowers and across the flowers as though they are the same body. The camera focusses on her eye, from the side, and crimson liquid is poured onto the screen flattening the image of her eye as it is flooded. The diegesis seems to drive the viewer's experience of the feminised scene towards her interior – without affording a centred perspectival view of her. Perhaps the installation provides the possibility for partially locatable references to her, the viewer's gaze potentially shifting between the multiple references to her between the different screens.

The feminine is multiple in *Pour Your Body Out*. I think that she is referenced in sensible excess of what the participant can receive. As the image wraps around the room, it repeats, fragments, enlarges, and deforms her representation through its apparatus, materiality, references to her and subversions of the performance of the feminine. In this way the participants might be said to be immersed in the process of cyborg imaging. Further to this, I propose that *Pour Your Body Out* can be interpreted through my thesis' proposition, this being, that the apparatus potentially envelops the audience in the fantasy of intrauterine touching/vision as an experience of feminised spatiality in a gyneacentric register.

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Appendix 1

DVD: *(f)low visibility* (video documentation of installation);
A Room of One's Own (video artwork); and *Ocular Oracle* (video
documentation of interactive installation).